Trinity and Ontology

Towards a Theology of Being as Space in Colin Gunton

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By

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Abstract

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This thesis proposes that Gunton’s work on ontology is best understood if they are supported by a reconsideration of the concept of space that is used by him but is not as fully worked out in his work as much as other terms such as “relation” and “otherness.” It develops with the arguments that Gunton’s ontology has an element that can be best understood with the help of the concept of space (chapter 1); that most problems attributed to Gunton by his critics are problems resulting from their particular approaches, rather than residing in Gunton’s work itself (chapter 2 and 3); that Gunton’s use of the Cappadocians is truer to the thrust of their works than his critics’ (chapter 4); that “spatiality” will better serve Gunton’s purpose as his third transcendental than “relationality” (chapter 5); that the notion of “the three” which is not fully accounted in Gunton corresponds well with the notion of “spatiality” being suggested in this study, the latter encompassing both relation and otherness and the former encompassing both the one and the many (chapter 6); that the “one” language used of God in the Bible is better understood in an nominal than a numerical sense, corresponding to the notion of “the three” discussed in the previous chapter (chapter 7); and that the God of the Old Testament is the same God as the God of the NT in that they are “God” or “One” (God of all) who is both one and many, both general and particular, both given and shaped, rather than the former representing the oneness or unity of God and the latter the threeness or diversity of God, with the conclusion that the ontology of being as space is more fundamental and so more widely applicable than the ontology of being as communion of persons (chapter 8).

Acknowledgment

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Abbreviation

Writings of Colin E. Gunton

BB	*Becoming and Being: The Doctrine of God in Charles Hartshorne and Karl Barth*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001 2nd edn (1978).
YT	*Yesterday and Today: A Study of continuities in Christology*, London: Dart, Longman & Todd, 1983.
EA	*Enlightenment and Alienation: An Essay Towards a Trinitarian Theology*, London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1985.
AA	*The Actuality of Atonement: A Study of Metaphor, Rationality and the Christian Tradition*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989.
PTT	*The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997 2nd edn (1991).
CC	*Christ and Creation*, Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1992.
OTM	*The One, the Three and the Many: God, Creation and the Culture of Modernity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
BTR	*A Brief Theology of Revelation*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995.
TtT	*Theology Through the Theologians*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996.
TC	*The Triune Creator: A Historical and Systematic Study*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998.
IA	*Intellect and Action: Elucidations on Christian Theology and the Life of Faith*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000
CF	*The Christian Faith: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2001.
AB	*Act and Being: Towards a Theology of the Divine Attributes*, London: SCM Press, 2002.
TtP	*Theology Through Preaching*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001.
FSS	*Father, Son and Holy Spirit: Toward a Fully Trinitarian Theology*, London: T&T Clark, 2003.

Contents

Introduction

As one who came to England with the intention to do a doctorate study on the book of Job, I had two paths ahead after finishing a MA course on Aspects of Biblical Interpretation at London School of Theology. The first was to follow the original plan, and the second to change direction towards a further study into what had drawn my attention during the course on hermeneutics, what then I called "relation theology" in comparison to "process theology." I chose the latter, and the choice was like giving up studying *about* Job and choosing to do theology like Job (or the Joban author) did. What I did not fully appreciate then is an implication of the choice; only by hindsight, I now realise that doing theology like Job involves suffering like him to such an extent as to lose everything, even cherished thoughts about God, only to gain everything back renewed. Once the research project started, however, I was made realise that "relational theology" had already begun and been widely discussed, meaning that I had to narrow my subject. There were two options suggested by my supervisor: Stanley J. Grenz; and Colin E. Gunton.[1] The initial research indicated two things that helped me to make the decision that was made. One is the *engaging* style of Gunton's writing.[2] I found Gunton's work preferable to Grenz' in that the former provides more space for readers' participation in the discussion of the topics chosen by him. Gunton, in other words, engages with his subject in such a way to invite readers to engage with the matter through his writings. The second is a sort of *rapport* that I found between the questions addressed by Gunton and the questions that had been with me for long, especially the questions about the relations between God and the world, between Father, Son and Spirit, between the individual and the social, between the one and the many. These are not, of course, matters discussed in Gunton alone, yet their combination with trinitarian theology by such an engaging way as described above was so inviting.

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[1] Colin Gunton appears to have gone through a similar process in the choice of the subject of his doctorate project. Cf. Robert Jenson, 'Afterword,' in Paul Louis Metzger (ed.), *Trinitarian Soundings in Systematic Theology*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2005, 218. For a biographical account of Colin Gunton, cf. Metzger, 'Forward,' in *Trinitarian*, 1–4; and Stephen R Holmes, 'The Rev Prof Colin Gunton,' *The Guardian*, Tuesday June 3, 2003.

[2] It was only at a later stage that I found these comments: '[w]hat marks Gunton apart from clearly evangelical writers such as the English McGrath or Canadian Grenz are the facts that he both writes for a wide readership that is not explicitly evangelical and that he is very much a creative theologian who takes the content of his faith and applies it to the major issues facing the contemporary church' (Graham MacFarlane, 'Gunton's Impact,' *Catalyst* 27/2, 2001); '[w]hat Reformed folks need to learn from Colin is a style of engaged theologizing, participatory knowing and a willingness to advocate strongly for positions on contended issues' (Bruce McCormack, 'The One, The Three and The Many: In memory of Colin Gunton,' *Cultural Encounters* 1/2, 2005, 16).

The significance of the person and work of Colin Ewart Gunton (1942–2003) for Christian theology today, not only in England but worldwide, is well noted by those who has, unlike me, had personal encounters with him.[3] Among them is John Webster who says,

> Colin Gunton … was one of the key figures in the renewal of systematic theology in Britain in the last thirty years of the twentieth century. He wrote prolifically on many themes in constructive Christian theology, especially on the way in which trinitarian teaching impacts conceptions of God's relation to creation.[4]

With due recognition of the variety of areas and themes Gunton has written about, this study has focus on three of them: Trinity, ontology and conceptuality. The doctrine of the Trinity takes the predominant place among various dogmas and doctrines discussed by Gunton. We can catch a glimpse of the importance of the doctrine in his trinitarian articulation of the gospel: 'the Father interrelates with the world by means of the frail humanity of his Son, and by his Spirit enables anticipations in the present of the promised perfection of the creation.'[5] This shows how trinitarian Gunton's theology is at its core, with perspicuous emphases on the humanity of the Son and the eschatological action of the Spirit.[6] We can expand the observation by overviewing Gunton's work and critical works on them. First, Gunton's authorship begins with *Becoming and Being*,[7] which presents Barth's theology under the heading 'Barth's Trinitarian Theology,' and ends with *Father, Son and Holy Spirit*, which has the subtitle *Essays Toward a Fully Trinitarian Theology*.[8] In between, we have *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, *The One, The Three and The Many*,[9] and *The Triune God*.[10] Even in *Christ and Creation*[11] and *A Brief Theology of Revelation*,[12] the titles that do not have

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[3] As for Gunton's work as it stands, there are 15 authored books, not including 3 volumes of commentary on the Lectionary, about 9 edited and co-edited books, and over 115 essays and articles, 34 of which are incorporated into his authored books. For a comprehensive bibliography, see Paul H. Brazier (ed.), *The Barth Lectures: Colin E. Gunton*, London: T&T Clark, 2007, 262–71.

[4] John Webster, 'Systematic Theology after Barth: Jüngel, Jenson and Gunton,' in David F. Ford and Rachel Muers (eds), *Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology since 1918*, Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007, 258.

[5] Colin E. Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997 2nd edn (1991), 72.

[6] Two main emphases that run through the essays collected in Colin E. Gunton, *Theology Through the Theologians*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996.

[7] Colin E. Gunton, *Becoming and Being: The Doctrine of God in Charles Hartshorne and Karl Barth*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001 2nd edn (1978).

[8] Colin E. Gunton, *Father, Son and Holy Spirit: Toward a Fully Trinitarian Theology*, London: T&T Clark, 2003.

[9] Colin E. Gunton, *The One, the Three and the Many: God, Creation and the Culture of Modernity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

[10] Colin E. Gunton, *The Triune Creator: A Historical and Systematic Study*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998.

[11] Colin E. Gunton, *Christ and Creation*, Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1992.

a reference to the Trinity, we find these:

> To be God, according to the doctrine of the Trinity, is to be persons in relation: to be God only as a communion of being. It is that which is replicated, at the finite level, by the polarity of male and female: to be in the image of God is to be called to a relatedness-in-otherness that echoes the eternal relatedness-in-otherness of Father, Son and Spirit.[13]

> [N]ot the patterns of Platonic formality or of Aristotelian causality but trinitarian relationality offer possibilities for drawing analogies between the being of God and that of the world. The world reveals the hand that made it in the remarkable combination of unity and diversity, of relationality and particularity, that it manifests, marks that can be recognised by their analogy to the unity and diversity of the triune God.[14]

Through the late 90s till 2003, this trinitarian thinking does not abate but continues, leading to the publications of *The Christian Faith*[15] and *Act and Being*,[16] the last two monographs dedicated to a trinitarian exposition of Christian doctrines and divine attributes. Back in the 8os, we have *Yesterday and Today*,[17] *Enlightenment and Alienation*[18] and *The Actuality of Atonement*,[19] which are not explicitly trinitarian in focus, yet not because trinitarian thinking is absent,[20] but because the focus is rather Christology, modernity and atonement. That said, there are places in which one may find an explicitly trinitarian remark.[21] To cite one,

> Just as the language of a successful science must to some extent be the gift of that reality of which the scientist asks questions, so, to an even greater extent, our language about Christ must be the gift of God the Spirit and he gives to us the capacity both to indwell the Christ and to speak authentically of him.[22]

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[12] Colin E. Gunton, *A Brief Theology of Revelation*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995.
[13] *CC* 101.
[14] *BTR* 62.
[15] Colin E. Gunton, *The Christian Faith: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2001.
[16] Colin E. Gunton, *Act and Being: Towards a Theology of the Divine Attributes*, London: SCM Press, 2002.
[17] Colin E. Gunton, *Yesterday and Today: A Study of continuities in Christology*, London: Dart, Longman & Todd, 1983.
[18] Colin E. Gunton, *Enlightenment and Alienation: An Essay Towards a Trinitarian Theology*, London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1985.
[19] Colin E. Gunton, *The Actuality of Atonement: A Study of Metaphor, Rationality and the Christian Tradition*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989.
[20] Cf. Stephen Holmes, 'Towards the *Analogia Personae et Relationis*: Developments in Gunton's Trinitarian Thinking,' in Lincoln Harvey (ed.), *The Theology of Colin Gunton*, London: T&T Clark, 2010, 32–4; Joseph Sverker, *Constructivism, Essentialism, and the Between: Human Being and Vulnerability in Judith Butler, Steven Pinker, and Colin Gunton*, Uppsala: Upsala University, 2017, 117f n.3.
[21] Cf. *YT* 133–5, 148f, 155f; *EA* 140–2; *AA* 168–71 and 199f.
[22] *YT* 149

One can see, finally, how Gunton's trinitarian theology is actualised in the context of preaching. Gunton's *Theology Through Preaching*[23] is a series of thirty sermons which are saturated by the trinitarian themes, insights and theses which are discussed systematically in other works. The first chapter, for example, which is a sermon about the Bible on 2 Timothy 3:16 ends in these words:

> It [the Bible] so represents God's reality and love before our minds that it makes them real, mediates them to us, and the book becomes the inspiration for our lives. Inspiration means the action of God the Spirit, and the Bible is thus the means of the Spirit's action because by it, and through Christ, we come to God the Father, creator and redeemer of all.[24]

The prominence of the doctrine of the Trinity in Gunton's programme is also confirmed by works of others on Gunton. First, we have Lincoln Harvey edited *The Theology of Colin Gunton*, a collection of twelve essays discussing various aspects of Gunton's theology. While William Whitney introduces six of them as 'specifically focusing on Gunton's understanding of the Trinity,'[25] as a matter of fact the other six also deal with a theme or issue that can be appropriately discussed only in reference to Gunton's trinitarian thinking.[26] Whitney's own work on Gunton's doctrine of creation is one of the monographs attesting to the prominent place of the Trinity in Gunton's work. Other works include the six major works on Gunton's theology published before 2013 and surveyed by Whitney.[27] There are also works which are not a full engagement with Gunton's trinitarian theology but still treat it to a substantial degree for an appropriation.[28] Lastly, there are articles published in journals and books.[29] Commonly indicated by all these works on Gunton is that he is a trinitarian theologian and it is necessary, even inevitable, for any work on Gunton to involve an engagement with Gunton's trinitarian theology.

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[23] Colin E. Gunton, *Theology Through Preaching*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001.
[24] *TtP* 28. Cf. also, ch.6 entitled 'The Triune God (Ephesians 2.18),' which is followed by nine chapters on Jesus Christ, ch.15 'The Holy Spirit (John 16.14)' and ch.19 'The Church in the World (Ephesians 1.3).'
[25] William Whitney, *Problem and Promise in Colin E. Gunton's Doctrine of Creation*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013, 3. The six essays that Whitney has in mind must be chaps 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 12.
[26] They are ecclesiology, anthropology, atonement, providence, modernity and the relationship between Gunton and Barth.
[27] Cf. Whitney, *Promise*, 3–5.
[28] E.g., Esther L. Meek, *Loving to Know: Covenant Epistemology*, Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011, chapter 12, 327–59; Sverker, *Constructivism*, chapter 4, 117–58.
[29] E.g., Roland Chia, 'Trinity and Ontology: Colin Gunton's Ecclesiology,' *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 9/4, 2007, 452–68; Uche Anizor, 'A Spirited Humanity: The Trinitarian Ecclesiology of Colin Gunton,' *Theomelios* 36/1, 2011, 26–41; Paul Cumin, 'Colin Gunton and the Integrity of Creation: Christ as a Particular Human (An Economic Concept of Mediation),' in his *Christ At the Crux: The Mediation of God and Creation in Christological Perspective*, Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014, 169–95.

Yet it needs to be noted that Gunton is not a trinitarian theologian in the sense that he has provided a comprehensive account of the doctrine of the Trinity or developed a new model of the Trinity so much as that he makes extensive use of the doctrine of the Trinity for discussing aspects of Christian faith and life.[30] This is not endorsing of the first qualification given by Webster for his point,[31] if it means that Gunton's theology has significance only in comparison with the works of the British deists.[32] Webster is more correct on the second note that 'the fertility of Gunton's trinitarian theology has to be seen in his application of it to his constructive work in other areas, particularly in the doctrines of creation and in the formulation of a Christian metaphysic and theory of culture.'[33] Not surprisingly, though interestingly,[34] critical works on Gunton tend to be a treatment of his theology not so much on its own terms but *in relation to* other subject matters, such as creation, anthropology and ecclesiology.[35] Webster may have a point in taking this "fertile" or "constructive" side of Gunton's work as a balance to what he perceives as weak points in Gunton's work, yet we shall see that Gunton's constructive use of the doctrine of the Trinity might be better understood as revealing as it is the essence of his trinitarian thinking, namely, ontology.[36]

The significance of ontology for Gunton is evident in his overview of the doctrine of the Trinity in modern theology, which concludes with an introduction of ontology as a challenge that cannot be evaded as 'the most promising and most difficult of all aspects of trinitarian thought.'[37] That said, there are three respects, at least, in which ontology is central to Gunton's understanding and use of the doctrine of the Trinity. The first is

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[30] Gunton's comment on Calvin in the following words appear to apply well to his own work: 'Calvin's explicit treatment of the Trinity is confined to one chapter of his great work. But, *almost everywhere, his thought is structured by it*' (*FSS* 7, emphasis added).
[31] That Gunton's trinitarian theology, though expounded in many contexts, is not given a fully articulated account by Gunton himself; that such terms as "mediation," "communion," "person," and "relation" are used with great suggestiveness but not always accorded thorough analytical treatment; and that when the history of a doctrine is presented too much ground is covered too quickly. Webster, 'Systematic,' 261. For a similar comment see Christoph Schwöbel, 'The Shape of Colin Gunton's Theology. On the way towards a fully trinitarian theology, in Harvey, *Gunton*, 196.
[32] 'Gunton's trinitarian theology has to be viewed against the background of the instinctive deism of the leading British theologians from the 1950s on, in comparison with which Gunton's work has far greater depth and richness' (ibid). The difficulty with which to accept this is simply to do with the lack of a further qualification. It may be asked, for example, whether Gunton's work really has little value in relation to other metaphysical and theological vistas, such as monism, dualism, Unitarianism, pantheism and even atheism.
[33] Ibid.
[34] For a possible influence of Webster's comment on Gunton, see Whitney, *Problem*, 1; David Höhne, *Spirit and Sonship: Colin Gunton's Theology of Particularity and the Holy Spirit*, Farnham; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010, 3, 9.
[35] Of creation (Whitney), anthropology (Sverker) and ecclesiology (Chia, Anizor).
[36] An observation, though minimally, even by Webster, 'Systematic,' 262.
[37] Gunton, 'Trinity,' 954.

chronological, namely, that Gunton's earlier works, seen from the perspective of his work as a whole, show a steady movement towards encountering Cappadocian theology as the most appropriate form of Christian theology,[38] whereas that theology and the ontology of God drawn from it play key roles in his later works.[39] The second is concerned with Gunton's particular understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity as developed in response to Christian experience in order to answer not only 'the question about the identity of the God whom the church worshiped through the Son and in the Spirit'[40] but also 'the quite proper Greek question of *what kind of God* it is with whom we have to do.'[41] The third is substantial, and has to do with the content of Gunton's "constructive" works, which are concerned chiefly with exploring an ontology of the created being and are mostly discussed from the perspective of the being of God as a communion of three persons.[42]

These three aspects are evident in Gunton's *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*. Firstly, the book's essays occupy the middle point of Gunton's authorship,[43] dividing the earlier period when his focus is more on the relation between God and the world and the later period of which the main subject matter is ontology. Secondly, the theme, direction and development which unite the essays are all related to ontology. There are five chapters intended particularly as contributions to ontology, which follow discussions of the ontology of God in the first three chapters and which are followed by the last three chapters in which the matter of ontology is still central. Thirdly, Gunton underlies the ontological explorations undertaken in the essays of the book by the belief that 'it is only through an understanding of the kind of being that God is that we can come to learn what kind of beings we are and what kind of world we inhabit.'[44] The "kind of being" is the main phrase whereby Gunton means ontology,[45] and, for him, 'the development of the doctrine of the Trinity was the creation, true to the gospel, of a

[38] As shown in his historical review of the development, for example, in *PTT* 8–12 and Colin E. Gunton, 'The Trinity in Modern Theology,' in Peter Byrne and Leslie Houlden (eds), *Companion Encyclopaedia of Theology*, London: Routledge, 1995, 938f.
[39] As will be discussed at §3.1.
[40] *CF* 183.
[41] *CF* 185. Gunton's emphasis.
[42] Especially in those works mentioned by Gunton in *TC* x.
[43] The earliest essay (ch.5) was published in 1985, the latest (chs.9, 10) in 1996, and the rest in between 1986 and 1991.
[44] *PTT* xi.
[45] Cf. *PTT* xxix, 22, (of God), ch.4, 70, 74 (of church), ch.6, 100, 116 (of human), ch.8, 148, 153 and *TC* ch.2 (of world).

distinctively Christian ontology,'[46] 'an ontology that was distinctively different from those prevailing in the ancient world, though in greater continuity, yet different also from the ontology (-ies?) implicit in the Old Testament writings.'[47] Gunton believes that the understanding of being in terms of communion (rather than something underlying communion) is an ontological innovation, though he thinks it was neither maintained in subsequent generations nor extended to other areas, such as the doctrine of creation or ecclesiology, in which Greek philosophy continued to be influential.[48] Part of the task Gunton takes upon himself in response to the challenge of the modern condition is to retrieve the trinitarian conception of the being of God achieved through ancient christological and trinitarian reflections[49] and extend it to other areas of ontology (God, world, church, human and person).[50]

To a large extent, therefore, the task is conceptual and transcendental, rather than speculative and theorising: 'we are not here engaging in a mapping of the inner being of God, but asking what concepts we may develop in order to characterise the kind of being that God is.'[51] The point of struggling for an adequate trinitarian conceptuality is 'not as some abstract test of orthodoxy, but as a way of expressing coherently and as well as possible what it is that we are granted to know of the God to whom we are related by the Spirit through Jesus Christ.'[52] Simplifying a complex story of history, Gunton claims cautiously, though assuredly, 'a number of conceptual advances were made as the result of thought about the God who is indwelt and known in worship.'[53] Exploring and developing some of them is what Gunton says his book *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology* is devoted to.[54] This end goes with his view of the history of dogmatic development that is stated as follows:

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[46] *PTT* 60. This is Gunton's qualification of Harnack's view that 'the whole apparatus of early dogmatic theology was the imposition of a false metaphysic upon the gospel.' Cf. also, 'Trinity,' 398f.
[47] *PTT* 58. Cf. also, Gunton, 'Trinity,' 398f.
[48] Cf. *BTR* 42–6; *OTM* 136–41; *TC* 57–61; 73–9; *PTT* 56–61.
[49] 'The efforts of early work on christology were devoted to an examination of the question of the being of Christ: of who and what kind of being he is in relation to God the Father and the Holy Spirit, on the one hand, and to the rest of the human race, on the other. Similarly, trinitarian reflection centred on the nature of God and of his relation to the world' (*PTT* 57).
[50] Cf. *PTT* ch.3 (God), ch.4 (church), ch.5 (person), ch.6 (human), ch.8 (world), all understood in terms of a dynamic of being in relation.
[51] *PTT* 145.
[52] *PTT* 200, in reference to the suggestion of Thomas A. Smail, 'The Holy Trinity and the Resurrection of Jesus,' Andrew Walker (ed.), *Different Gospels: Christian Orthodoxy and Modern Theologies*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1988, 63–96, about how we say about 'the relationships of Father, Son and Spirit in God' in a way that 'would more faithfully reflect what the New Testament obliges us to say about the relationships revealed in the life and in the resurrection of Jesus' (76–8).
[53] *PTT* 8.
[54] Ibid.

> There is not a 'model' known as trinitarian doctrine, a fixed set of formularies, but rather a process of intellectual development—a tradition—during the course of which a number of conceptual possibilities have been shaped. It is the possibilities of these concepts for our knowledge of God, ourselves and our world that I wish to develop.[55]

There are four central concepts to Gunton's ontological exploration and development of the doctrine that being is communion: person, relation, otherness and freedom.[56] There is another concept, though, that is not mentioned by Gunton here but still plays an equally important role to the others for the development of the idea of being as communion, namely, space. The ambiguous status of the concept of space in Gunton is noted well by Professor Schwöbel. On the one hand, according to his observation, 'Gunton had always criticized theology's taking up of the spatial imagery of popular religious imagination to characterize a particular style of doing theology.'[57] On the other hand, however, the superficiality is transformed by the concept of space being used for thinking of the being of the triune God: 'In this way the superficial notion of space is subverted and no longer made to refer to the measurements of three-dimensional objects but to the space that is created by letting the other be the other in a relationship of unbreakable *koinonia* in which the Trinity exists and in which we shall be included without losing our own space, our otherness, by being swallowed up into the divine life.'[58] The burden of this study is to see whether that is the case, ultimately arguing for the concept of space as central to Gunton's understanding of the doctrine that being is communion as are the other four concepts explicitly mentioned by himself.

If that is the end of this work what concerns us here is the observations and questions that have led to the setting up the goal. There are two main places in particular, in which one can see how Gunton makes use of the word "space" and ask in what sense he uses it, one in his ontological exploration and the other in his transcendental project. Here we shall look only at the first, his 'The Human Creation: Toward the renewal of the doctrine of the *Imago Dei*.'[59] In this work, Gunton introduces the concept of space at various points in the process of moving towards a doctrine of the image of God. Three can be introduced as follows. At the first point, after having considered three different

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[55] *PTT* 195. Also, 155.
[56] Briefly introduced by Gunton himself in speaking of conceptual possibilities made possible by the theological revolution achieved by the s in *PTT* 8–12.
[57] Schwöbel, 'Shape,' 202. For a detailed discussion of this see §5.4.
[58] Schwöbel, 'Shape,' 203.
[59] *PTT* ch.6, 100–17, which is the same as 'Trinity, Ontology and Anthropology: Towards a Renewal of the Doctrine of the Imago Dei,' in Colin E. Gunton and Christoph Schwöbel (eds), *Persons, Divine and Human: King's College essays in Theological Anthropology*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991, 47–61.

cosmologies, Gunton says:

> According to the Phoenician scheme, there is no space between God and the world, and so no human freedom. According to the kind of Hellenism we have viewed, the space is placed in the wrong place: between mind and matter, so that there is too little space between the human mind and God, too much between one person and another: space here is at the expanse of relation. In the third, Hebrew, scheme, there is space, because of the freedom of the immutable God to create *ex nihilo*.

It is not difficult to know that in this passage Gunton speaks of space *between* God and world and *between* persons, though it is questionable whether it is used in a hermeneutical or metaphysical sense although the former appears to be the case. In any case, however, the point to be noted here is that the concept of space is at work on the same conceptual level as that of relation, indicating that the former is as important as is the latter, both in discussing the relation between beings.[60] Gunton continues, however,

> But we need more than space. Indeed, from one point of view, space is the problem: individualism is the view of the human person which holds that there is so much space between people that they can in no sense participate in each other's being. There is clearly space and space, and our requirement now is to find a conception which is correlative with that of relation.[61]

At this point, the significance of the concept of space is relativised against the problem of space that Gunton finds in individualism. It is from there that he seeks what he calls "a conception correlative with that of relation." The question is whether Gunton has shown what it is even later. The answer seems to be in what he says in this passage:

> To be a person is to be constituted in particularity and freedom—to be given space to be—by others in community. *Otherness* and *relation* continue to be the two central and polar concepts here. Only where both are given due stress is personhood fully enabled. Their co-presence will rule out both the kind of egalitarianism which is the denial of particularity, and leads to collectivism, and forms of individualism which in effect deny humanity to those unable to 'stand on their own feet'.[62]

It appears, according to this, that Gunton has "otherness" in mind as the conception that is correlative with that of relation, something that is indicated earlier when he says that 'we require space as well as relation: to be both related to and other than those and that

[60] Similarly, 'Coleridge knew that if there was to be personality there had to be both *relatedness* and *space* at once between God and the world and within the world between finite persons' (*PTT* 108, emphasis added).
[61] *PTT* 109.
[62] *PTT* 114.

on which we depend.'[63] If this interpretation is correct the place of space in Gunton is now ambiguous, with regard to *relation* and *otherness*: is it synonymous with *otherness*, both standing on the other side of correlation with *relation*, or simply preparatory of the introduction of *relation* and *otherness*? In other words, does the concept of space have an independent standing in ontology or only a hermeneutical value supporting Gunton's exposition of other ontological concepts? It appears that the polarity of relation and otherness, which is also reflected in various places,[64] puts restraints on a fuller realisation of the concept of space as his contribution to ontology.[65] The same consideration goes to the concept of space used in this passage:

> What flows from the concept of God as three persons in communion, related but distinct? First, there is something of the space we have been seeking. We have a conception of *personal space*: the space in which three persons are for and from each other in their otherness. They thus confer particularity upon and receive it from one another. That giving of particularity is very important: it is a matter of space to be. Father, Son and Spirit through the shape—the *taxis*—of their inseparable relatedness confer particularity and freedom on each other. That is their personal being.[66]

One weight of this passage is that it contains "something of the space Gunton has been seeking." And what we find here is not the space between God and world, nor the space between three persons of the Trinity, but "the space in which Father, Son and Spirit are related in their otherness, conferring particularity upon and receiving it from one another." This space does not serve to introduce the concept of otherness nor is it placed on the side of otherness vis-à-vis that of relation. Rather, it is explicable only with the help of both concepts of relation and otherness. Put another way, it is about the being of God yet of something that is understandable only in respect to Father, Son and Spirit and the relations they have with one another. One question here is whether this concept of space, which Gunton *draws from* the concept of persons in communion, is not *also* more fundamental than that of persons in communion, though not necessarily in the sense of an impersonal expanse underlying the persons. Another is what Gunton means by "that" in the last sentence, 'That is their personal being': "relatedness," or "particularity and freedom," or "Father, Son and Spirit conferring particularity on each other through the shape of their inseparable relatedness." The last appears to be the

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[63] *PTT* 107
[64] E.g., *PTT* 110, where Gunton speaks of the 'particularity of our universe' and the 'interrelatedness of all that is.'
[65] Such a restraint is also at work in Gunton's limiting of the concept of space to the side of otherness and particularity: 'Creation becomes understood as the giving of being to the other, and that includes the giving of spade to be: to be *other* and *particular'* (ibid, emphasis added).
[66] Ibid.

answer but is it not what he means by the *personal space* in which the three persons are for and from each other in their otherness? This raises a third question, namely, whether the concept of space can also be used for indicating the "consequential" aspect of the Trinity, resulting from the shaping of the conditional space by the persons coming into it and the ways in which they relate to each other. If these questions are valid, or at least to the extent that there is some ambiguity about the concept of space used by Gunton, this study takes it as a goal to clarify the matter.

The rest of this thesis comprises eight chapters, with the proposal that Gunton's works on the Trinity, trinitarian ontology and transcendental conceptuality are best understood if they are supported by the concept of space that is used by him but is not fully worked out in his theological and ontological explorations as other terms. Chapter 1 offers a detailed account of what Gunton means when speaking of God as a communion of three persons by outlining nine aspects of Gunton's ontology of God. The aim is first to have a foundation for engaging with some critiques; second, to show that Gunton's ontology of being as communion has an element that can be best understood by the concept of space; and, third, to highlight the need to take a step further than speaking of being in relation or communion.

Chapter 2 and 3 are meant to clear the ground for the thesis by dealing with some major critiques of Gunton's work: social Trinitarianism, projectionism, reductionism and others. There are two reasons for responding to them: first, that they highlight some areas in Gunton's work that need to be clarified, particularly regarding the ontology of being in relation or communion; and that they call attention to the need to examine Gunton's use of the Cappadocians by presenting a different understanding of their works. Chapter 4 looks at a Cappadocian text that is traditionally attributed to Basil the Great, for the reason that it is used by both Gunton as the basis of the ontology of being as communion and his critics for arguing that the text does not support Gunton's use of it. The aim is to answer the questions raised in the previous discussions, mainly as to whether Gunton or his critics are mistaken in their uses of the piece of the Cappadocian work.

The next three chapters build upon the ground cleared by the previous discussions towards a proposal of a theology of being as space. Examining Gunton's transcendental conceptuality, chapter 5 identifies a problem regarding the similarity between his first

transcendental, “perichoresis,” and the third, “relationality,” with the argument that either perichoresis or relationality will suffice to serve as Gunton’s first transcendental whereas “spatiality” will better serve than relationality as what Gunton intends by his third transcendental. Chapter 6 investigates Gunton’s use of the scheme of the one and the many for his ontological and transcendental enquiries, leading to a suggestion of a revised scheme in which we have “the three” corresponding to “spatiality” suggested in the previous chapter. The sense promoted will be that the one (*ousia*) is constituted by the many (*hypostasis*) as the three (*koinonia*). Chapter 7 is the longest chapter, and the justification whereby it was carried out is the significance of the subject matter and its relevance to the thesis of this study. It will take the previous discussion to a consideration of the one God texts in the Bible, seeking to show that there is a correspondence between the biblical “one” language and “the three” discussed in the previous chapter. Finally, in chapter 8, we shall consider the concept of space in the context of addressing two questions: how to understand Gunton’s view, within his framework, that the God of the Old Testament is the same God as the God of the New; and whether it is appropriate to apply Gunton’s ontology of being in relation or communion to understanding all other beings when it is drawn from a particular doctrine of the Trinity. After achieving a theology of being as space, the thesis will conclude with a consideration of the possibility of spatial ontology of personhood.

Chapter 1 Trinity and Being as Communion

The theology of God as a communion of three persons is at the heart of Gunton's ontological explorations and consequently, not surprisingly, is the main focus of criticisms of his work. While we shall look at the latter step by step, the focus of the present chapter is the former, beginning with a consideration of how to understand the development of Gunton's thinking about ontology.

1.1. Trinity and Ontology

Key to understanding Gunton's ontology as well as his work in general is the doctrine of the Trinity. Chronologically, however, Gunton's focused concentration on the Trinity in respect to ontology begins to appear in his writings from the late-1980s, not from the start of his work. Whilst there is a change, as Stephen R. Holmes correctly notes,[1] it is doubtful whether we should understand the change, as Holmes does, in terms of a shift from one position to another regarding the content and use of the doctrine of the Trinity. Holmes points to Gunton's shift from Barth's doctrine of the Trinity, as a hermeneutical way of speaking of God's being, to Zizioulas' doctrine of the Trinity, the three persons in communion, as an ontological description of God.[2] Four things can be said in response, guiding the general argument that it is more appropriate to understand Gunton's turning to Cappadocian theology in terms of a continuity or development, with a change only in focus or degree of attention, than it is to take it in terms of a change of mind.

First, as noted by Holmes, Gunton speaks of Barth's *hermeneutical* use of the doctrine of the Trinity,[3] yet that does not necessarily mean that he takes Barth's view to be all hermeneutical and, by implication, that Gunton's view is wholly hermeneutical at the related stage. Holmes argues by drawing a line between Gunton's early period of hermeneutical use of the doctrine and the later period of ontological use. This division, however, is difficult to justify against evidence. For example, *Becoming and Being* and *The One, the Three and the Many* are two main books belonging to the first stage according to Holmes, yet their content is not only language and hermeneutics but also

[1] Holmes, '*Analogia*,' 32–48, to which Sverker refers for saying that 'considering the sometimes hidden existence the doctrine of the Trinity had held in Gunton's earlier theology, the emphasis on the doctrine of the Trinity must be seen as something of a new turn' (op. cit., 117).
[2] Holmes, '*Analogia*,' 42.
[3] 'Its function is at least in part *hermeneutical*.' *BB* 186. Gunton's italics. Twice cited in Holmes, '*Analogia*,' 33 and 37.

ontology and metaphysics.[4] In addition, nine out of the eleven chapters in *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*,[5] the main book of Gunton's later stage according to Holmes, are essays published before the publication of *The One, the Three and the Many*.

It is questionable, secondly, whether for Gunton the word "person" has ever been an "embarrassment," though he takes note of Barth's negative, or cautious (because he uses it anyway), position towards its theological use.[6] In Holmes' view, however, it was as much an embarrassment for Gunton as it was for Barth. He says, 'listen again to his own word: "Three persons" suggests three separate Gods, not the one God in the threefold richness of his being, [while the word "substance" suggests a static, immovable deity].'[7] This is perhaps the only text provided by Holmes as evidence for Gunton's discomfort with the word "person." There, however, Gunton is speaking of the modern situation in which the theological use of person can be misleading,[8] rather than expressing his own position about the use of the word. Besides, if Holmes' reading of the passage is correct, we would have to say that the word "substance" (also used in the latter part of the passage) is an embarrassment for Gunton, too. Gunton's issue, however, has never been with the word "substance" itself, but only with certain notions of it, such as were developed by the Enlightenment thinkers, as we will see in more detail later.

It is debatable, thirdly, whether it is correct to say that in Gunton 'trinitarian analogies are replaced by trinitarian mediation.'[9] The chief ground of the claim is what Holmes makes of Gunton's *Christ and Creation* and *The Triune Creator* in particular; the former as the book in which the Irenaean "two hands" of God theme appears for the first time

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[4] For example, the section 'Ontology in Karl Barth,' *BB* 174–7. For a comment on the significance of this study for Gunton's subsequent works, including trinitarian and ontological works, see Robert Jenson, 'A Decision Tree of Colin Gunton's Thinking,' in Harvey, *Gunton*, 8f, and Schwöbel, 'Shape,' 183–5.
[5] The exceptions are the last three chapters of the second edition (1997).
[6] For Gunton's account of Barth's wish to abandon the traditional designation of the three as "persons" and rather use the term "person" as a description of 'the one God who exists in three modes of being,' see *BB* 139–41, which is presented without an indication of his own preference or decision. He rather notes, 'Even when the expression 'mode of being' is employed, it is done with intent "to express by this term, not absolutely, but relatively better and more simply and clearly the same thing as is meant by "person"' (141).
[7] *EA* 141, as cited in Holmes, '*Analogia*,' 42, apart from the words in brackets, which are added for discussion.
[8] The context is similar to that in which Gunton says of Barth's wish to abandon the use of "person" for the three of the triune God, that is, '[b]ecause of the connotations of the term "person" and "personality" *as they are now used*.' *BB* 141. Emphasis added.
[9] Holmes, '*Analogia*,' 42.

in print,[10] and the latter as that to which the recognition underlying the introduction of the theme becomes absolutely central.[11] The observation may be correct, but what is observed can be explained or viewed in a different way than is done by Holmes. That is, to see the first occurrence of the Irenaean theme in terms of an answer to a question that has been with Gunton,[12] and understand that the theme becomes central to *The Triune Creator* simply because the relation of God to the world is the subject matter of the book.[13] As for "trinitarian analogies," it is not clear what the reader is to understand by that, given the different conceptions of analogy that Gunton is aware of. It can be Hartshorne's, for example, or Barth's, which for Gunton are quite different systems of analogy. Holmes also points to *A Brief Theology of Revelation*, as a work evidencing Gunton's search for trinitarian analogies as the main thrust of the use of the doctrine of the Trinity, with the Irenaean account of mediation appearing as a very muted theme.[14] Yet any adequate survey of the book will show that it is more difficult to find Gunton's search for trinitarian analogies in that work than to find his account of trinitarian mediation. Let us examine the passage cited by Holmes for his argument that the Irenaean mediation is only in the book as a very muted theme: 'As we have seen, that is not to evade the challenges of rationality, but to establish them on their proper basis: not on impersonal Platonic—Aristotelian structures, but *the free personal relation of God to the world through his son and Spirit*.'[15] This may be an insignificant, passing comment, yet it is more difficult to accept that than to interpret it as an answer to the very question that has concerned Gunton, namely, the question of the basis of 'Christian thought'[16] and 'our common human life on earth and the institutions which form the framework for that life.'[17] Besides, the last section of the last chapter of the book has the title of 'Varieties of mediation, but one Lord.' We might also point to Lecture 4, because its

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[10] Holmes, '*Analogia*,' 41, citing a passage from Gunton, *CC* 75, with further references. Holmes mistakenly links Gunton's introduction of the Irenaean theme to a belief that 'mediation must be fundamentally an account of persons in relations.'

[11] That is, the recognition that 'human and divine persons and relations are to be understood fairly univocally, in that "person" and "relation" become the middle terms in the arguments linking divine and human' (ibid).

[12] For example, a question that searches for a way of conceiving the relation of God and the world in such a way in which God remains free and other in his relation to his creation, which is one of the major issues in Gunton's comparative study of Hartshorne's and Barth's theology. The phrase "two hands" may be new, but the concept of mediation is already present to Gunton's work before its introduction into it in *Christ and Creation*. For an example, see *EA* 53f and *AA* 198f. In a later work, the Irenaeus' analogy is used for an argument that the Son and the Spirit are truly and fully God. See *CF* 181. For a different account of the matters of mediation, analogy and two-hand themes than Holmes', see Lincoln Harvey, 'The Double *Homoousion*: Forming the Content of Gunton's Theology,' in Harvey, *Gunton*, 87f and 92f.

[13] Cf. Terry J. Wright, 'Colin Gunton on providence: critical commentaries,' in Harvey, *Gunton*, 148.

[14] Holmes, '*Analogia*,' 41.

[15] *BTR* 63, italics added to indicate the part cited by Holmes, 'Towards,' 48 n.55.

[16] *BTR* 55.

[17] *BTR* 49.

main thrust concerns the mediating work of God the Spirit in salvation and revelation.[18] If "trinitarian mediation" is concerned with the way in which God relates to the world through his Son and Spirit,[19] then Lincoln Harvey's appraisal of Gunton's work appears to provide a better account of the development in Gunton: 'his neo-Irenaean theology of mediation is his proposed *settlement*. The Son and the Spirit, as the "two hands" of the Father, hold the world close-yet-at-a-distance, the generosity of God thereby affording the creature relative self-standing but never at the cost of God's genuine presence.'[20] The word "settlement" implies a quest towards it, whereas "shift" or "change of mind" suggests a move from one answer (or settlement) to another.

Finally, it might well lead to an oversimplification to criticise Gunton's work by using the scheme that distinguishes between Barth's doctrine of the Trinity and Zizioulas' in terms of the first as hermeneutical and the second as ontological, for at least two reasons. For Gunton, firstly, both doctrines have both ontological and hermeneutical elements, if the latter is about the way of speaking of God. Barth in *Becoming and Being*, for example, does not only speak of God *for us* but also God *in himself*,[21] and Gunton's turn to Cappadocian theology is for a better way of speaking of God, not to make God's existence dependent on the world.[22] For Gunton, secondly, there is a similarity between Barth's and Zizioulas' conceptions of the relation between the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity in their common understanding of the distinction as a device to safeguard 'the freedom of God' or 'absolute transcendence of God without alienating him from the world.'[23] It would be better, therefore, to understand the transition in Gunton from Barth to Zizioulas (or the Cappadocians) in terms of a move towards a more adequate ontology (and a hermeneutics, but not everything, because some aspects of Barth's approach remains central to Gunton's programme) with the help of the

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[18] *BTR* 64–82.
[19] For a definition of mediation of Gunton's own, 'Mediation denotes the way we understand one form of action—God's action—to take shape in relation to that which is not God; the way, that is, by which the actions of one who is creator takes a form in a world that is of an entirely different order from God because he made it to be so' (*CF* 5).
[20] Harvey, 'Double *Homoousion*,' 92f. Italics added.
[21] For example, in Barth, *Church Dogmatics Volume I: The Doctrine of the Word of God Part 1*, G. W. Bromiley (tr.), G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (eds), Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975, 370. For Gunton's account of Barth's speaking of God in eternity, see *BB* 145–8.
[22] As implied in Holmes' argument that 'Claude Welch and Jüngel are cited for the idea that Barth is doing something fairly radical in developing a dynamic and relational account of God's existence, but God's relationality here is used only as a way of speaking of God as essentially relational *without falling into Hartshorne's trap of making God's existence dependent on the world*' ('*Analogia*,' 33. Italics added). The implication that Gunton has fallen into Hartshorne's trap is hard to accept from the argument. Holmes, further, downplays the weight Gunton places on Jüngel's interpretation of Barth compared to Welch's and its significance for his own work to develop in time.
[23] *TtT* 123.

doctrine of the Trinity whose formulation reflects more adequately the reality of the God of the gospel.[24]

1.2. Being as Communion

We now turn to Gunton's ontology of God as a communion of persons, partly in order to establish a detailed account of it, partly in preparation for an engagement with some criticisms of it and partly as a way of introducing a question concerning Gunton's ontology of being as communion.

1.2.1. Cappadocian gift

Gunton understands that early Christian theologians, in their development of the doctrine of the Trinity, moved in the right direction by addressing the theological significance of the historic act of God in Christ and reflecting upon its ontological implications for the being of God.[25] In subsequent generations, however, the doctrine of the Trinity tended to be understood in terms indebted rather to Greek philosophy which Gunton thinks was surpassed already by the development of the doctrine, resulting in not only a loss of the ontological innovation achieved by the 4th century theologians but also distortions of the Christian faith and impoverishments of church life.[26] Modernity, in Gunton's view, played a key role in revealing some theological problems of Christendom, though catastrophically failed to achieve what it wished to.[27] With that perception of the situation, Gunton takes the doctrine of the Trinity formulated by the Cappadocian fathers as 'the means to an ontology alternative to those of the intellectual worlds in which Christianity once took shape, and must now reshape its form of life if it is to be adequate to the challenge of modern conditions.'[28] And, for him, this is the essential teaching gained from them: 'the first thing to be said about the being of God is that it consists in personal communion. Communion is for Basil an ontological category. The *nature* of God is communion.'[29] "Being as communion," therefore, is not an idea of

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[24] For Gunton's own account of the move from Barth's ontology to the Cappadocian, see *BB* 230–3.
[25] *PTT* 8f. 'if Jesus … is understood to do the work of God, he cannot finally be separated in thought and being from God.'
[26] As narrated in various places, including *PTT* ch.3; *OTM* 80–5; *AB* ch.3.
[27] For a summary comment by Gunton, see *OTM* 1; 'Trinity,' 942. For a detailed response to modernity, cf. *EA* chs.1–2; *AA* chs.3–5; *PTT* ch.2; *OTM* ch.1. For a critical view of Gunton's appraisal of modernity, Brad Green, 'Colin Gunton and the Theological Origin of Modernity,' in Harvey, *Gunton*, 171–4, and Stephen N. Williams, *Revelation and Reconciliation: A Window on Modernity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995; also, Paraskevè Tibbs, 'Created for Action: Colin Gunton's Relational Anthropology,' in Harvey, *Gunton*, 123f. A response to this critique is given at §5.1 n.2.
[28] *PTT* 71.
[29] Ibid. Original emphasis. Reference is made to John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in personhood and the Church*, London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1985, 134.

Gunton's own creating, but is based on his understanding of a received doctrine of the Trinity, especially from the Cappadocian theologians.

Gunton acknowledges, in the preface to *Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, that he ran 'the risk of romanticising the Eastern tradition,'[30] before wiser counsels prevailed so that he was finally not tempted to do so. One reason is that it is not his concern 'to canonise any theologian or school,' nor 'to play the East against the West.'[31] He knows that the Eastern tradition, too, has a history of parallel problems.[32] Nonetheless, he accepts that the Cappadocians made crucial contributions to enabling Christian theology to move away from the influence of Greek ontology to gain its own ontological basis.[33] He is convinced that 'the truly creative achievement of all trinitarian thought was that of the trinitarian ontology produced by the Cappadocians.'[34] There are three points in particular that Gunton highlights: (1) that the Cappadocian doctrine of the Trinity is a genuine advancement from the Nicene theology of *homoousios,* from the theology of God's being as 'being in relation' or 'a shared being,' enriching the concept of relationality with that of communion;[35] (2) that it is adequately formed by paying due attention to the actions of God in the economy of creation and redemption;[36] and (3) that it is an ontological innovation surpassing Greek ontology, enabling conceptual possibilities in the light of which further ontological explorations can be undertaken.[37]

1.2.2. A pattern

Gunton makes extensive use of Cappadocian theology of God as a communion of persons, more frequently than he explains it, yet mostly as the basis of his discussion of the ontology of other things. That is the case even with its first occurrence within his corpus. Discussing the subject of community in *The Actuality of Atonement*, he comments that 'the work of Christ and the Spirit is to create, in time and space, a living

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[30] *PTT* 204. Looking back upon a previous point of time, Gunton says that then he was even tempted to call *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology* '*Homage to the Cappadocia*.'
[31] Ibid.
[32] See, *PTT* xii, for the problem of abstraction, and xxii, for the problem of divine energies replacing the activities of the Son and the Spirit. For the latter, see also 'Trinity,' 940, 950f and *FSS* 56, n.56, with reference to Dorothea Wendebourg, 'From the Cappadocian Fathers to Gregory Palamas. The Defeat of Trinitarian Theology', *Studia Patristica* 17.1, 1982, 194–8. Cf. also, T. F. Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith: The Evangelical Theology of the Ancient Catholic Church*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988, 72.
[33] *PTT* 8–12 and 'Trinity,' 938f.
[34] *BB* (2001, 2nd edn.), 'Epilogue,' 232.
[35] Gunton, 'Trinity,' 939; *PTT* 9 and *OTM* 214.
[36] *PTT* 171 and 175.
[37] Cf. *PTT* 8–12; 'Trinity,' 938f. Also, John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985, 83–9.

echo of *the communion that God is in eternity*.'[38] He then draws out from that 'a notion of the church as the community that is created and called to be the finite embodiment of *the eternal communion of Father, Son and Spirit*.'[39] 'Human community,' he continues, 'is the gift of *the God who is himself communion*.'[40] Although these quotations are preceded by a brief discussion of the Son and the Spirit mediating God's love and work, insofar as trinitarian communion is concerned, its manifestation here is rather unexpected, with an introduction to it neither found in the previous pages of the book nor in earlier works in print. It is simply assumed and used as the basis of his discussion of the church as community and human community in general.[41] That said, it is a pattern which repeats in his ontological studies in later works, though that does not mean that Gunton has not provided an explanation of the idea of God as a communion of the three persons.

1.2.3. Christian ontology

Being as communion is not a distortion of the doctrine of the Trinity, for Gunton, but a correct expression of the ontology developed alongside the doctrine.[42] While he thinks that the doctrine of the Trinity, not being in the Bible as such, has developed as an attempt to answer the question that is raised by the biblical account of trinitarian mediation about who the God that Christians worship is,[43] at the same time Gunton considers it as 'an answer to the quite proper Greek question of *what kind of God* it is with whom we have to do.'[44] To repeat,[45] 'the development of the doctrine of the Trinity was the creation, true to the gospel, of a distinctively Christian ontology.'[46] In relation to the surrounding world, the creation of the theology of being as communion was the beginning of the process of overcoming Greek ontology in which 'to be is either to be

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[38] *AA* 199. Emphasis added.
[39] Ibid. Emphasis added.
[40] *AA* 200. Emphasis added.
[41] Holmes, '*Analogia*,' 42 appears to have a best explanation: 'a fairly fundament revolution in his thought' took place 'between 1982 and 1985' and resulted from 'his working with John Zizioulas on the BCC commission on the Trinity. After this point, he adopted what has become known, rightly or wrongly, as an "Eastern" account of the Trinity, stressing the true personhood of the three hypostases and finding an account of the divine unity in their relations.'
[42] Cf. Zizioulas, *Being*, 36–41.
[43] *CF* 184.
[44] Ibid. Cf. *PTT* 167–77. The notion of "what kind," which is prevalent in Gunton's ontological explorations, may be considered as a point, among others, in which Gunton is different from Zizioulas in that the latter resists any talk of "what" question vis-à-vis "who" or "how" question. For the contrast between "what" and "who" questions, John Zizioulas, 'On Being a Person: Towards an Ontology of Personhood,' in Christoph Schwöbel and Colin E. Gunton, *Persons, Divine and Human*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991, 44f.
[45] Cf. Introduction, 6.
[46] *PTT* 60, and 'Trinity,' 398f. Cf. also, Zizioulas, *Communion*, 185f.

universal or to be individual: to be defined by virtue of participation in universal form or by virtue of material separation from other beings,'[47] rather than 'the victory of Hellenistic philosophy over the gospel' or 'the imposition of a false metaphysic upon the gospel.'[48] Gunton adds, though, that these ontological insights were not extended into other areas of Christian doctrine while rival ontologies came in to fill the vacuum.[49] Therein lies a reason why it is so important for him to retrieve the ontology of God achieved by the 4th century theologians in their development of the doctrine of the Trinity upon the reality of God revealed in the economy of the triune God.

1.2.4. Fully Trinitarian

It is important, for an appropriate understanding, to distinguish between Gunton's speaking of God as a relational being (or being in relation) and his speaking of God as a communion (or being in communion).[50] If the former is the result of the Nicene theologians introducing a note of relationality into the being of God, according to Gunton, then the latter is a further development achieved by the Cappadocians paying due attention to the Holy Spirit.[51] Speaking of God as a relational being would be sufficient for Christian theology if it had only the actions of God the Father and the Son Jesus Christ. Yet there is also the action of the Spirit, even according to the biblical account.[52] The description of the Lord and giver of life indicates that the Spirit is also a divine being with a distinct mode of action,[53] not simply as a divine force, though he is indeed, but as a person who is other than the Father and the Son.[54] With the threeness in being and action of Father, Son and Spirit,[55] therefore, Gunton turns to the Cappadocian language of *koinonia*, rather than remaining with the Nicene language of *homoousios*.[56] Of particular importance for Gunton's emphasis on the threeness or trinitarian

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[47] *PTT* 9.
[48] Both phrases express Harnack's view, the first in the words of Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life*, San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991, 36 and the second in Gunton's in *PTT* 60. Apart from the appraisal of the doctrine of the Trinity itself, Gunton generally agrees to the view of Harnack that 'the original teaching of Christianity was overlaid with a philosophy that was foreign to it' (ibid.).
[49] Cf. Introduction, 7.
[50] Cf. Gunton, 'Trinity,' 939.
[51] *PTT* 9, 48–55.
[52] E.g., Ps 33:6; Ezek 36:27; John 6:63; 15:26; Act 2:4.
[53] *IA* 104.
[54] See *TtT* 116 and *FSS* 47.
[55] If the notion of "begotten" provides a way of conceptually distinguishing a distinct mode of being other than God the Father, another is provided by the notion of "proceeding." Thus says Gunton, 'The Son is eternally begotten; the Spirit proceeds, and is therefore in God in a different way' (*CF* 185).
[56] Given that Gunton still uses the word "relation" of the being of God even after the introduction of the word "communion" to his work (e.g., *OTM* 229), a question will remain as to whether we should understand them in the light of what is discussed here or as a sign that he is not aware of the distinction being made here, between his speaking of God in relation and speaking of God as being in communion.

distinctness is Basil's conception of the Spirit as the perfecting cause,[57] as the best way for him to consider the distinctive mode of the Spirit in relation to Father and Son.[58] The reason is that it corresponds best with the biblical emphasis on the eschatological work of the Spirit.[59] In his view, on the other hand, the eschatological dimension of the action of the Spirit is among the most neglected in the Western tradition, though with some exceptions.[60] It is against the stream that Gunton pays full attention to the Spirit as the third person of the Trinity: 'the Spirit is neither a mode of existence nor a relation; rather, he is a person existing in a certain relation—*his* mode of being—with the Father.'[61] In drawing attention to the trinitarian distinction, however, Gunton does not fail to affirm the unity of the Spirit with the Father and the Son. The three are distinct and yet inseparably related to one another, in other words, distinct in relation and related in distinction. That is the meaning of the triune communion, whereas communion is the meaning of the word God, so far as Gunton's understanding is concerned.[62]

1.2.5. Of persons

The three who constitute the triune communion are not 'parts' but 'persons, who are distinguishable but not separable.'[63] Gunton knows that "person" is a problematic concept to use in a modern context and so needs to be understood carefully. He has qualifications for his use of the concept of person, among which we might consider the following three as drawn from Cappadocian theology.[64]

For Gunton, firstly, a person is not an individual,[65] 'in the sense that the latter is defined in terms of *separation from* other individuals, the person in terms of *relations with* other persons.'[66] This is not a distinction that Gunton has from the start. Rather, it emerged a decade and half later than the publication of his first book as his attention became more

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[57] And the Father, 'the original cause,' and the Son, 'the creative cause.' Basil of Caesarea, *On the Holy Spirit*, XV. 36 and 38, as cited in *IA* 104; *FSS* 114. Gunton would gloss: 'the Father originates; he creates through the Son; and he perfects through the Spirit' (*IA* 104).

[58] Cf. also, essays in *TtT*, particularly from chapter 7.

[59] *CF* 185.

[60] In Calvin, for example, Gunton finds something similar said of the Spirit to Basil's conception of the Spirit as the perfecting cause: 'in transfusing into all things his energy, and breathing into them essence, life, and movement, he is indeed plainly divine.' John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, F. L. Battles (tr.), J. T. McNeill (ed.), Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960, I. xiii. 14, as cited in *IA* 104.

[61] *FSS* 47.

[62] *PTT* 10. For a definition of 'fully trinitarian theology' for Gunton, cf. Schwöbel, 'Shape,' 202.

[63] *AB* 122.

[64] See *BB* 227–33, for a focused treatment of the person and the Trinity in this regard.

[65] See *PTT* 11, 39 and 85; *TtT* 224; *AB* 122; *CF* 186. Cf. also, Schwöbel, 'Shape,' 192.

[66] *PTT* 11. The focus of the distinction is relationality or relatedness. For Gunton, in a sense, "individuality" is equivalent to "unrelatedness," though, in another, to "uniqueness." See *PTT* 92 for the former and 201 for the latter.

focused on the doctrine of the Trinity and ontology.[67] Once introduced, however, it plays a clarifying role in his arguments. He says, for example, 'To treat the person and the individual as the same thing—to define the person as an individual—is to lose both person and individual.'[68] He also speaks specifically about why it is no longer adequate to translate the trinitarian concept of *hypostasis* as individual, 'simply because the three are not individuals but persons, beings whose reality can only be understood in terms of their relations to each other.'[69]

Secondly, however, persons are 'not relations, but concrete particulars in relation to one another.'[70] The definition of the person as a relation, which Gunton finds prepared in Augustine, if not created by him,[71] and presented as an example in Torrance,[72] is an attempt to define the concept of person that he thinks has proved disastrous, and so is particularly to be avoided.[73] There are two grounds for the warning. One is a tendency 'to define the personal in terms of the impersonal,'[74] and the other 'making it difficult to speak of relations *between* the persons.'[75]

Thirdly, the person is a logically primitive notion,[76] and an ontologically primitive reality.[77] As such, says Gunton, 'we cannot do justice to its reality by attempting to define it in other terms, especially terms drawn from impersonal realities.'[78] The best way to define the person for him is ostensive, that is, 'by indicating where persons are

[67] *Enlightenment and Alienation* has "person" and "individual" used interchangeably. See 105 and 107. The first occurrence of the distinction appears in *The One, the Three, and the Many: An inaugural Lecture in the Chair of Christian Doctrine* (14 May 1985, King's College London, pamphlet, limited publication), which is later incorporated into *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology* (1991) as chapter 5 with a slight revision.
[68] *PTT* 85. We lose them, to gloss, as personal uniqueness is lost in numerical singleness and the latter thereby loses its ontological basis.
[69] *PTT* 39, in speaking of the inadequacy of translating the Cappadocian concept of *hypostasis* as "individual."
[70] Ibid. This is a point that needs to be held especially against some mistreatments of Gunton as a promoter of the concept of person as relation, as will be discussed in chapters 2 and 3.
[71] *PTT* 40f.
[72] *FSS* 46f.
[73] *PTT* 200.
[74] Ibid. It is a concern that is already expressed in his inaugural lecture: 'a species-being, a universal, is impersonal, and it is not possible to base the freedom and society of persons on what is impersonal' (*PTT* 87).
[75] *PTT* 200. See below n.91 for what Gunton does not mean by relations between persons.
[76] *PTT* 85 and 200, in reference to P. F. Strawson, *Individuals: An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics*, London: Macmillan, 1982, 101–3.
[77] *PTT* 200, in reference to Zizioulas, *Being*, 40f.
[78] Ibid.

to be found and the way that they are conceived to be and act.'[79] Hence Gunton's speaking of the person in such terms as 'free, other and yet constituted by relations to other persons,'[80] 'whose reality can only be understood in terms of the relations to each other,'[81] and 'a being in relation.'[82] These all are understandable as reflecting attempts to seek the uniqueness or even individuality of a person in the relations one has with others.[83]

1.2.6. Relations between persons

The concept of relation is yet essential to Gunton's appropriation of the theology of being as communion and our understanding of it. While some aspects of his concept of relation are already touched on in the previous discussion, a separate treatment of them is advisable for two reasons in particular. First, although relation is discussed in his first book, different relations are touched on throughout his work: relations between God and the world; relations among the members of the Trinity; relations between individual and society; relations between humanity and the rest of the world, and so on. Secondly, then, it is not precise to say that Gunton maintains a relational ontology, although that is how he describes his pursuit.[84] That for Gunton persons are not relations, the point noted previously, makes it reasonable to think that there must be a qualified sense in which he uses relation or relational for his work.

That said, an approach can be made to an account of the concept of relation operating in Gunton's theology of being as communion by looking at the contrasts he makes between the Cappadocians and Augustine.[85] Firstly, relation in Gunton's trinitarian theology is primarily about relations *between the three persons*, rather than qualifications of the soul or the inner Trinity.[86] The contrast is not made out of concern for the social model of the Trinity rather than the psychological. The underlying concern is rather the need to have a way to maintain the distinctness of the three persons

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[79] Ibid. Gunton considers another way to define the person, that is, 'to use a tautology in which the terms mutually define each other,' in reference to Calvin's definition in *Institutes*, I.xiii.6 and Claude Welch's interpretation of it in *In This Name: The Trinity in Contemporary Theology*, London: SCM Press, 1953, 190f.
[80] *PTT* 13.
[81] *PTT* 39.
[82] *PTT* 114.
[83] *PTT* 13.
[84] *PTT* 94.
[85] What is intended by Gunton is not 'naive' playing of the Cappadocian tradition against the Western' (Gunton, 'Trinity,' 951). Cf. also, Schwöbel, 'Shape,' 207 n.59.
[86] *PTT* 102.

revealed in the economy,[87] not compromising the unity of God yet countering the tendency to modalism and individualism,[88] and the bearing that the triune relatedness can bring on the question of human relatedness.[89]

Secondly, trinitarian relations are of *ontological* status, in the sense that they are expressive of the ways by which the persons exist and are made what they are.[90] This is an emphasis that Gunton stresses in contrast to what he finds in Augustine for whom relation is rather of logical status, remaining 'a concept owing more to Aristotelian logic than to attention to concrete and personal realities.'[91] Gunton simply highlights the contrast by drawing out two different kinds of question: 'What kind of being is this, that God is to be found in the relations of Father, Son and Spirit?' (Cappadocian) and 'What kind of sense can be made of the apparent logical oddity of the threeness of the one God in terms of Aristotelian subject-predicate logic?' (Augustinian)[92]

Thirdly, being ontological, trinitarian relations are *constitutive* of what the three persons are.[93] The three are 'not persons who then enter into relations, but are mutually constituted, made what they are, by virtue of their relations to one another.'[94] That is one way in which Gunton speaks of mutually constitutive relations. Another is that in which it is said that the three together constitute the being of God by virtue of the relations they have with each other.[95] In Augustine, however, relation is intermediate, ontologically speaking, between substance and accident, designating that which can be predicated "relatively" of God, not "accidentally" though, yet not "substantially" or "essentially" either.[96] The link Gunton draws between Aristotle's and Augustine's thought is therefore not an exact repetition of the former in the latter. What is common to them is rather the essential irrelevance of relation to ontology.

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[87] For Gunton's concern about the distinctness of the three persons against what he sees in Augustine, see *PTT* 4, 35, 42, 50, 57 and 92.
[88] For the tendency to modalism, 42, and the tendency to individualism, 43 and 103.
[89] *PTT* 102f.
[90] *PTT* 11.
[91] *PTT* 95. See also 41. Aristotle's relation in Gunton's words: 'relation is subordinate to substance. Relations are what take place or subsist between substances that are prior to them: something first exists, and then enters or finds itself in relation to other things, which may change its accidents, but not what it really is (short of destroying it)' (151f).
[92] *PTT* 40. *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology* is, with little exaggeration, a response to the first question asked by Gunton himself.
[93] See *PTT* 13, 152 and *FSS* 47.
[94] *PTT* 152. Similarly, by conceptual parallels, 'the being of the church consists in the relations of the persons to each other' (*PTT* 75).
[95] *PTT* 39.
[96] *PTT* 41, in reference to Augustine, *The Trinity*, V.12 and VII.3.

Fourthly, the relations of the three to one another in trinitarian communion are *the place in which lies the being of God*, in the sense that the latter derives from the unfolding of the three in their relations to each other.[97] The contrast here is with Augustine's view according to which the true being of God is something that underlies the threeness of the persons, something other than the God revealed in the economy, some unknown and unknowable substance.[98] Locating the source of the difference in Augustine's calling attention away from the economy to the individual mind, [99] Gunton draws attention back to the economy as the starting point of Christian speaking of the being of God.[100]

For Gunton, finally, relations in which the three are in eternal communion is *the locus of the unity of God*, in the sense that 'Father, Son and Spirit in their interrelatedness make God to be the God that he is.'[101] This unity is neither that of an individual, nor of a collectivity, but the unity of communion of persons in relation. It is not unity in the narrow sense that is opposite to diversity, but in a more inclusive sense encompassing diversity. Here is Gunton's answer to the question of how the three can be one: '*this* God is one only by virtue of the way in which Father, Son and Spirit mutually and reciprocally give to and receive from each other everything that they are.'[102]

These five notions of relation can be challenged, as they have been, from a perspective of different understandings of Augustine or the Cappadocians.[103] It needs to be said, then, that the point here is not whether their presentations by Gunton are correct or not but simply that as aspects of the concept of relation operative in his work they need to be considered for an adequate treatment of his appropriation of the theology of being as

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[97] The word "unfolding" is from a passage cited twice by Gunton as the heart of the matter for Basil that is denied by Augustine: 'three somethings subsist from one matter (*materia*) which, whatever it is, is unfolded in these three' (*PTT* 42 and 95).
[98] See *PTT* 32, 42, 48 and 54.
[99] See Gunton's discussion of Augustine's trinitarian analogies in *PTT* 42–8, and the discussion of community and sociality in *OTM* 214–29.
[100] Gunton refers to Calvin as one who gets the balance better than Schleiermacher and Tillich concerning religion saying, 'we should remember that for him apart from the Christian gospel we all get our deity wrong, fabricating idols which far from saving us in fact enslaves us' (*PTT* 161f).
[101] *FSS* 46. 'God is indeed one in being: there is only one God. But this very oneness is not a mathematical oneness, as Arius and Greek theology had taught, but a oneness consisting in the inseparable relation of Father, Son and Spirit, the three *hypostases*' (*PTT* 10).
[102] *CF* 186. Original emphasis. In other words, 'God is only what he is as three persons whose being is so closely bound up with one another that they together constitute one God' (ibid).
[103] For a critique of Gunton from Augustine's perspective, see Bradley G. Green, *Colin Gunton and the failure of Augustine: The Theology of Colin Gunton in Light of Augustine*, Cambridge: James Clark & Co., 2012; idem, 'The Protomodern Augustine? Colin Gunton and the Failure of Augustine,' *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 9, July 2007 (3), 328–41, and, from a Cappadocian perspective, Stephen R. Holmes, *The Holy Trinity*, Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2012.

communion.

1.2.7. Of otherness and freedom

God as communion is not only of persons and relations, but also of otherness and freedom. According to the trinitarian description of God held by Gunton, the persons that constitute the triune communion exist as *others* in their *free* relations to one another.[104] In that picture of God, relation and otherness are two poles essential to what it means to be a person.[105] While relations are constitutive of what the persons are, as shown previously, otherness provides the condition of the relational constitutiveness.[106] In moving his thought in that direction, Gunton is not driven by a desire for a perfect image of God, or a sudden change of mind resulting from an uncritical reception of an alternative theology, but a focussed attention to the economy that reveals God's presence and action to and in the world through the Son and the Spirit. Gunton says thus, of the latter, 'To speak of the Spirit in the economy is to speak of a personal agent of the Father's action in and towards the world.'[107]

Also crucial is Gunton's critique of some concepts of the Spirit, including that of Augustine as love and gift. For the following three reasons, among others, Gunton thinks that the identification of the Spirit as love and gift has been detrimental to an adequate conception of the being of God.[108] First, love and gift do not serve the purpose of distinguishing the Spirit from the Son, because 'the Son might equally, perhaps with more justification, be described as the Father's love and gift to the world.'[109] Secondly, it does not have biblical support, so that 'the Spirit in himself is conceived to be other than he is shown to be in revelation.'[110] Thirdly, the Spirit conceived merely as the link between Father and Son encourages a conception of the life of God as 'a closing of an

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[104] For a brief account of the concepts of otherness and freedom in Gunton, see *PTT* 11f, and for a more detailed account, 201–4.
[105] A historical survey of the issue is provided by John Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, London: T&T Clark, 2006, 43–55, with the repeated point that otherness is not solely an ethical or psychological matter but is more primitively an ontological matter, constitutive of being and existence (11, 14, 25, 27, 49, and 143).
[106] That is, 'to be a person is to be related as an *other*. … Personal relations are those which constitute the other person as other, as truly particular' (*PTT* 11f). Emphasis original.
[107] *TtT* 122.
[108] Preceded by three problematic identifications, 105–9. followed by three missing features
[109] *TtT* 109. Robert Jenson, 'The Holy Spirit,' in C. E. Braaten and Robert Jenson (eds), *Christian Dogmatics*, Volume 2, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984, 126f.
[110] *TtT* 110. What the Spirit is shown to be in the economy is not primarily love and gift but rather 'the creator of community,' 'the transcendental Lord,' 'the life-giving power of God in and towards his creation,' 112–9. Gunton notes that Augustine's identification of the Spirit as love is by special fitness. For a detailed discussion, see *PTT* 49–50.

eternal circle: love as moving outward to the Son and back to the Father through the Spirit, so that the Spirit has little function except as a link in a love that is a relation between Father and Son alone.'[111] There is otherness in that love too, but not 'true otherness,' if Richard of St. Victor is correct, as is he for Gunton, with the view that 'the third person of the Trinity is essential if there is to be true otherness in the Godhead. There must be three if there is to be a true outwardgoingness and diversity in God.'[112]

Gunton does not intend to reject the concept of the Spirit as the bond of love between Father and Son for the reasons above, or to replace it with the idea of communion, but to revise it by taking into consideration other views of the work of the Spirit.[113] One is that the Spirit is the third person of the Trinity who particularises the persons of Father and Son in their relations: 'to liberate them to be themselves, to be particular *persons* in community and as communion.'[114] Another is the view of the Spirit as 'the one who seeks to involve the other in the movement of giving and receiving that is the Trinity: that is, *to perfect the love of Father and Son by moving it beyond itself*.'[115] The outcome is a concept of the Spirit as the one who not only relates Father and Son in love but also particularises them and perfects the love of God. God is love, not so much because the Spirit is love[116] but because the Spirit enables the community of love to be and perfects it as love in community in himself and in relation to the world. Divine love, then, is 'neither self-love nor the merely reciprocal love of two for each other, but a love intrinsically oriented to community.'[117] The Spirit is indeed the dynamic of the divine love, completing the relations between Father and Son. However, the relationship is now understood not as 'a closed circle, but a self-sufficient community of love freely

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[111] *TtT* 126.
[112] *OTM* 190. Reference is made to Richard of St. Victor, *De Trinitate*, 3, xix. For Gunton's qualifications of using this source which is to become controversial by some defenders of Augustine, see *PTT* 91 and *TtT* 126f. To be noted is that Gunton is resorting only to Victor's insight about the nature of love.
[113] See *TtT* 128 and *CF* 186, for Gunton's mention of his engagement with the idea of the Spirit as the bond of love in terms of revision or correction.
[114] *OTM* 190. According to the discussion of the Spirit in the economy in *TtT* 112–9, Gunton bases his speaking of the Spirit as the particularising agent on a reconsideration of the economy of the incarnation as revealing the Spirit as 'the one sent from the Father who in personal divine action enables the incarnate Son to be himself' (116). Of particular importance for the discussion here is the theology of Edward Irving, with the view of the Spirit as revealed in 'subduing, restraining, conquering, the evil propensities of the fallen manhood, and making it an apt organ for expressing the will of the Father' (ibid). G. Carlyle (ed.), *The Collected Writings of Edward Irving in Five Volumes*, Vol. 5, London: Alexander Strahan, 1864, 120.
[115] *TtT* 127. Emphasis original. See also *OTM* ch.7; *TtT* 119–23; *IA* 104; and *CF* ch.3, for Gunton's appropriation of the idea of the Spirit as the perfecting cause.
[116] This is Gunton's understanding of Augustine's position. For his discussion of the matter, see *PTT* 49f.
[117] *TtT* 127.

opened outwards to embrace the other.'[118]

1.2.8. Economic and immanent

The being of the triune God is a communion of the three persons, not only as revealed in time but in himself (*in se*). There are notable reasons for which Gunton upholds the distinction between the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity or the necessity of the move to the latter from the former. The first is concerned with the breach between economy and theology caused by treating the unity of God separately from the economic revelation. According to a common practice Gunton finds in some western theologies, the divine oneness is philosophically explained, and the threeness of the divine action biblically expounded, with priority given to the former over the latter.[119] The result is usually a conception of the one God understood in terms foreign to the economy, with an implication that the reality of the being of God is something underlying or overlying the revealed threeness of the persons.[120] Gunton goes against the stream of this practice when he affirms the unity between what God is revealed to be (the economic Trinity) and what God is in himself (the immanent Trinity) by appealing to Cappadocian theology.[121] In this matter, Gunton closely follows Barth: 'If God is what we are given in the economy, then we may conclude that the economy is a reliable guide to what God is, eternally and in himself.'[122]

However, secondly, Gunton is not saying, like Rahner, that 'the "economic" Trinity *is* the "immanent" Trinity, and *vice versa*.'[123] He, rather, remains with the view of Barth that the relation between the economic and the immanent, between knowing and being, is asymmetrical, with the explanation that 'while act is indeed a true guide to essence, knowledge of essence does not entail knowledge of the particular acts that God is going to perform.'[124] What is preserved by upholding this asymmetrical relationship is the freedom of God, which is a major concern in Gunton's work as it is in Barth's: 'God gives Himself entirely to man in His revelation, but not in such a way as to make

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[118] *TtT* 128.
[119] Cf. *PTT* ch.3. especially 30–3, in reference to Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, tr. Joseph Donceel, London: Burns and Oates, 1970, 17. Cf. also, Zizioulas, *Being*, 40f.
[120] Cf. *PTT* 41f. Indeed, 'some*thing* other than the God revealed in the economy' (54).
[121] Cf. *PTT* 54f.
[122] *TtT* 123. See, also, *BB* 147; *CF* 184. Barth, *Dogmatics* I.1., 371. The best description of Gunton's approach might be found in what he says of T. F. Torrance's: 'Here, without doubt, Torrance is following the method, though not in every respect the content, of Barth's great treatise on the Trinity. If revelation is truly God present to the world, then it is God present to the world, and what is given in time is the saving presence of the eternal God' (*FSS* 42). Emphasis original.
[123] Rahner, *Trinity*, 22.
[124] *BB* 147.

Himself man's prisoner. He remains free in His working, in giving Himself.'[125] 'To say that God is already, and eternally, an order of love,' furthermore, 'prevents us from having to say that it is in some way necessary for God to create a world, to have another being alongside himself without which he is not truly himself.'[126] Gunton affirms that God did not have to create the world but could remain content with his eternal being, and for two reasons.[127] While the second concerns the integrity of the world, as we will see soon, the first concerns God's integrity as God. As Gunton puts it, 'A God who has to have a world around him is a miserable godlet, a pagan projection, and not the omnipotent God of Christian confession.'[128] It is worth repeating, especially against those who view Gunton from the perspective that contrasts Barth and Zizioulas,[129] that Gunton rather finds a similarity between them in their common concern for the freedom of God, referring to Zizioulas' understanding of the distinction (between essence and energy) as 'nothing else essentially but a device created by the Greek Fathers to safeguard the absolute transcendence of God without alienating Him from the world.'[130]

For Gunton, thirdly, the point of the doctrine of the immanent Trinity is not 'to speculate about the "inner being" of God in any way that takes us away from the implications of his action,' but 'to provide a ground for the theology of the economy.'[131] The economy is indeed a guide to a knowledge of the being of God but, for Gunton, that does not mean that God is only the economy. It means, rather, that the economy reveals the being of God because the former is *grounded* in the latter. The language of "ground" indicates Barth's influence, or Jüngel's, as it is first used in Gunton's account of their works in similar ways to that in which it is used later, as shown in the citation above. As for Barth, Gunton understands, 'he has shown that in revelation God relates himself to man. The doctrine of the Trinity as relational being both follows from that understanding of relation in revelation, and at the same time shows how it is grounded in the prevenient

[125] Barth, *Dogmatics* I.1., 371, as cited in *BB* 147.
[126] *CF* 187.
[127] 'Hypotheticals,' says Gunton, 'are generally to be avoided in theology, because we are in it concerned with what God has done, is doing, and will do. Yet sometimes they are necessary if we are to understand the consequences of denying the doctrine of the immanent Trinity.' Ibid. See, also, *PTT* 141–3, especially for Gunton's responses to the argument for the rejection of the doctrine of the immanent Trinity on the grounds 'that, if God does not need the creation in some way or other, he must be a distant and unfeeling monarch' (142).
[128] Ibid.
[129] Cf. Holmes, '*Analogia*,' 41 and others, the former as discussed at §1.1. and the latter as will be introduced into our discussion in due course.
[130] Zizioulas, *Communion*, 202, as cited in *TtT* 123.
[131] *CF* 185.

reality of God.'[132] As for Jüngel, 'According to his understanding, Barth's understanding of revelation has made possible a radically different conception of God's independent reality (*Selbständigkeit*), in which God is seen as *essentially* relational being; in which the being of God *for us* is not something foreign to God's essence but is grounded in his very being.'[133] In short, God is revealed as such in the economy because this is what God is in eternity, essentially or substantially yet not exhaustively.

Fourthly, as indicated previously, Gunton maintains the distinction of the immanent Trinity from the economic for the sake of the world to be itself. Gunton makes this point particularly in response to some attempts to remain concrete by casting doubt on the necessity of a move beyond the economy.[134] He points to Ted Peters' argument that no more is needed than to affirm that 'God is in the process of constituting himself as a God who is in relationship with what is other than God.'[135] Gunton finds a similar tendency in LaCugna, namely, that 'all talk of the Trinity must … be in some way a function of the economy of salvation,' and that 'any doctrine of the immanent Trinity, even one derived from an understanding of the economy, is to be rejected.' [136] The danger Gunton notices in these polemics against the doctrine of the immanent Trinity is that they sail close to pantheism, endangering not only the freedom of God but also the freedom of the world. They bring God and the world so close that 'there is ultimately only one reality, the divine-worldly emanation, which constitutes the world and then swallows it up.'[137] It is in the face of this danger, then, that Gunton affirms the doctrine of the immanent Trinity in relative distinction from the economic, 'to allow for personal space between God and the world.'[138] The doctrine serves as 'a foundation for the relative independence and so integrity of worldly reality also, and thus for human freedom.'[139] Here we have another reason of Gunton affirming that God did not have to

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[132] *BB* 145. Similarly, 'because God is in fact related to the world, and to men in particular, through the reconciling activity of Jesus Christ, there is an eternal (and so in a sense necessary) relatedness within the divine reality' (159).
[133] *BB* 142f. Gunton's emphasis.
[134] By the immanent Trinity Gunton means 'ontological Trinity ... of who and what kind of being God is essentially, in the eternal taxis or order of persons in relation' (*FSS* 23). For Rahner, on the other hand, 'the immanent Trinity refers to the reciprocal relationships of Father, Son, and Spirit to each other, considered apart from God's activity in the world.' LaCugna, *God*, 212.
[135] Ted, Peters, *God as Trinity: Relationality and Temporality in Divine Life*, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993, 145, as cited in *PTT* xvii and *FSS* 23.
[136] *PTT* xviii and *FSS* 23.
[137] *PTT* xviii and *FSS* 24. Cf. LaCugna, *God*, 223.
[138] *IA* 103.
[139] *FSS* 24. For the relevance of the immanent Trinity for the human freedom in Gunton's thinking, see *PTT* 128–35; *AB* 104–8.

create the world.[140] That is, the integrity of the world: 'A sovereign God is able to allow the world to be itself, and not simply a function of his being, a "clone" or "puppet" as it is fashionably expressed.'[141]

In the following passage, finally, we might find another, perhaps the most basic, reason Gunton gives for the relevance of the doctrine of the immanent Trinity, that is, his desire to be true to the gospel:

> The distinction between the doctrines of the economic and eternal or immanent Trinities is important. It is not suggesting that there are two Gods, two Trinities, but that two different things have to be said about the triune God if we are to do justice to scripture: that he is triune as he presents himself to us in our time, and that this tri-unity is eternal. We need to know and say this because we need to know that we can rely on what God reveals: that what he seems to be, that he truly is. Otherwise, how could we rely on his always being loving, holy, merciful, powerful and the rest?[142]

1.2.9. Thinking trinitarianly

To speak of God as a communion is admittedly a sort of speculation about the being of God, yet not 'attempting a map of the inner reality' but 'to say what we can of the God made known in Christ.'[143] This can be explained in the following three ways. First, Gunton knows that speaking of God is 'the most perilous of all theological enterprises,' though not chiefly because 'we cannot penetrate the veil of phenomena.'[144] The chief reason is rather that 'we may violate the unknowableness of God by essaying a speculative construction of what we suppose God to be' or 'run the risk of "objectifying" God: of turning him into a static and impersonal object to be subjected to our unfettered intellectual control.'[145] The point is not a theological renunciation, but a necessary caution that has both a negative closing and a positive opening. Positively speaking, secondly, theology is made possible by God coming into a relationship with

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[140] 'Hypotheticals,' says Gunton, 'are generally to be avoided in theology, because we are in it concerned with what God has done, is doing, and will do. Yet sometimes they are necessary if we are to understand the consequences of denying the doctrine of the immanent Trinity' (ibid). See, also, *PTT* 141–3, for Gunton's responses to the argument for the rejection of the doctrine of the immanent Trinity on the ground that, 'if God does not need the creation in some way or other, he must be a distant and unfeeling monarch' (142).

[141] *FSS* 24. In Barth's words, 'It is only the heathen gods envy men' (*Church Dogmatics Volume III: The Doctrine of Creation, Part 2*, H. Knight et al (trs), G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (eds), Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1960, 87, as cited in *CF* 187.

[142] *AB* 94. Similarly, 'How justified would we be in trusting the faithfulness of God's love if God were not eternally loving, but became a loving God when human beings reciprocate his love?' Christoph Schwöbel, 'God is Love: The Model of Love and the Trinity,' *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematishce Theolgie und Religionsphilsophie* 40, 1998, 322, as cited in *AB* 132.

[143] *PTT* 144.

[144] *PTT* 193.

[145] Ibid.

us, and we may speak of God while entering and remaining in that relationship.[146] For Gunton, however, the relationship between God and us is not only a place where theology is to take place. It is also the place in which we have our being as persons created in the image of God.[147] As he sees, the trinitarian theology began its life with those who found themselves being in a relationship with God through the Son and the Spirit. It is by being in that relationship that they succeeded in using language to express the being of God as experienced and made known. Significantly, to repeat,[148] 'a number of conceptual advances were made as the result of thought about the God who is indwelt and known in worship.'[149] The significance is that Gunton, thirdly, wants to continue the process, with such a question as 'what concepts we may develop in order to characterise the kind of being that God is,'[150] Thus his enquiry concerns an adequate trinitarian conceptuality, though 'not as some abstract test of orthodoxy, but as a way of expressing coherently and as well as possible what it is that we are granted to know of the God to whom we are related by the Spirit through Jesus Christ.'[151] Greater emphasis, though, is given to exploring the implications of any theology of God for expressing ontologies of the world, of the human and of the church.[152] The programmatic question becomes 'whether the concepts generated by our consideration of the economy … have any light to throw on the being of that which is not God, but the creation of God.'[153] Gunton's aim in pursuing the question is to 'demonstrate the impact of not so much arguing from the Trinity to the world by analogy as thinking trinitarianly through the focus provided by the action of God in the world.'[154]

1.2.10. Question

Having outlined nine aspects of Gunton's ontology of being as communion, we are left with a question as to whether for Gunton communion is synonymous with relation or it means something that includes relation but is different from relation itself. The latter appears to be the case, given his understanding that the ontology of being in relation was established by the Nicene theologians the concept of relationality was enriched by

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[146] Cf. *PTT* 6.
[147] *PTT* 7.
[148] Cf. Introduction, 7.
[149] *PTT* 8. For the worship as the basis of theology, Gunton refers to Edmund Schlink, *The Coming Christ and the Coming Church*, Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1967.
[150] *PTT* 145.
[151] *PTT* 200.
[152] See *PTT* 196f, and chapter 4 (church), chapter 6 (human) and chapter 8 (creation). 196f.
[153] *OTM* 167.
[154] *PTT* xxix–xxx. Cf. also, *FSS* 6–11.

the Cappadocians with that of communion.[155] Yet has he made it clear enough against any misunderstanding?

[155] Gunton, 'Trinity,' 938f.

Chapter 2 Social God and Projection

Over recent decades social trinitarianism has risen to become one of the critical issues in contemporary theological discussions.[1] Gunton himself is aware of the issue and wary of some dangers of the social approach, as we shall see. Yet, interestingly, his own work is perceived by some critics as belonging to social trinitarianism.[2] There are three respects in which it is interesting and so need to be discussed. Firstly, Gunton, seen as a social theorist, constitutes a starting point of some critiques of his work. Secondly, such a simple categorisation paves the way for other criticisms, the charge of projectionism among others. In this regard, thirdly, it would be unacceptable to leave Gunton misunderstood if he is, not only as a person but also as a theologian of great significance for the study of Christian theology today.[3]

2.1. Gunton and Social Trinitarianism

Richard Fermer, perhaps firstly, treats Gunton's work as promoting a concept of being as communion in the sense of 'a social "fellowship" which might be paralleled by human society.'[4] More explicit and definite is Karen Kilby's critique, which puts Gunton in what she sees as a deeply problematic group of contemporary social theorists

[1] As the development and discussions are documented in Claude Welch, *In This Name: The Doctrine of the Trinity in Contemporary Theology*, New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1952, 29–34. 133–51, 295–302; John L. Gresham Jr., 'The social model of the Trinity and its critics,' *Scottish Journal of Theology* Vol. 46, 1993, 325–43; Stanley J. Grenz, *The Social God and the Relational Self*, Louisville, London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001, 1–20; and Thomas H. McCall, *Which Trinity? Whose Monotheism? Philosophical and Systematic Theologians on the Metaphysics of Trinitarian Theology*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010.

[2] E.g., James Mackey, 'Are there Christian Alternatives to Trinitarian Thinking?', in James M. Byrne (ed.), *The Christian Understanding of God Today*, Dublin: Columba Press, 1993, 66–75; Richard Fermer, 'The Limits of Trinitarian Theology as a Methodological Paradigm,' *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematicsche Theologie Und Religionsphilosophie* 41/2, 1999, 158–86; Karen Kilby, 'Perichoresis and projection: Problems with social doctrines of the Trinity,' *New Blackfriars* 81, 2000, 432–45; and 'Trinity, Tradition, and Politics,' in Christophe Charlamet and Marc Vial (eds), *Recent Developments in Trinitarian Theology: An International Symposium*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014, 73–86; and Mark D. Chapman, 'The Social Doctrine of the Trinity: Some problems,' *Anglican Theological Review* 83/2, 2001, 239–54.

[3] One evaluation from a renowned scholar would suffice: 'Systematic theology owes Gunton an immense debt. He gave intellectual and rhetorical weight to the task of constructive Christian theology in Britain at a time when the majority believed it to be redundant.' John Webster, 'Gunton,' in Harvey, *Gunton*, 29.

[4] Fermer, 'Limits,' 165, in reference to Christopher Stead, 'Why Not Three Gods? The Logic of Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Doctrine,' in H. R. Drobner, and C. Klock (eds), *Studien zu Gregor von Nyssa und der christlichen Spätantike*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990, 158.

of the Trinity.[5] As her basic characterisation of social theories, she points to the concept of God conceived as 'a collective, a group, or a society, bound together by the mutual love, accord and self-giving of its members,' rather than 'some individual person or thing which has three sides, aspects, dimensions or modes of being.'[6] Mark Chapman includes Gunton in his list of social theologians, describing him as having been 'vociferous in his defence of a social doctrine of the Trinity.'[7] Chapman provides several factors that he thinks are common to advocates of the social doctrine, the chief one being the idea of the Trinity as a community of love and harmony.[8] For Stephen Holmes, a trinitarian proposal is social if it speaks of God in terms of persons, communion or perichoresis, locating God's personhood or "subjectivity" in the three persons rather than in the divine essence or substance.[9] He takes Moltmann as representing this with the development of 'an avowedly "social" doctrine of the Trinity: three persons, mutually interrelated, mutually constitutive, with no hierarchy.'[10] Zizioulas is another example in that it appears to Holmes that Zizioulas' ascription of volition to the Father, rather than the Trinity, implies that 'each of the *hypostaseis* is fully personal, possessed of their own will, intellect, and so on, in precisely the way that Barth and Rahner warned against.'[11] Now, as for Gunton, Holmes' treatment is ambiguous. In his historical review of the development of the doctrine of the Trinity, with focus on refutation of the social trinitarianism developed in recent decades, Holmes does not explicitly apply the word 'social' to his treatment of Gunton. Yet it is difficult to avoid the impression that each of his criticisms appears to be said with Gunton in mind, whether it is about the concept of person, the use of perichoresis, the critique of Augustine, or the appeal to the Cappadocian Fathers. Responding to

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[5] Others who are treated as social theorists with Gunton by Kilby include Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, London: SCM Press, 1981; Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*; C. Plantinga Jr., 'Social Trinity and Tritheism,' in Ronald J. Feenstra and Cornelius Plantinga, Jr. (eds), *Trinity, Incarnation, and Atonement: Philosophical and Theological Essays*, Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989, 21–47; and Patricia Wilson-Kastner, *Faith, Feminism and the Christ*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983. Leonardo Boff is also mentioned, yet no reference given.

[6] Kilby, 'Perichoresis,' 433.

[7] Chapman, 'Social,' 246. Here Gunton is treated together not only with Moltmann and Boff but also with Conrad Noel, *Jesus The Heretic*, London: J. M. Dent & sons, 1939; Kenneth Leech, *The Social God*, London: Shelan Press, 1981; and Geevarghese mar Osthathios, *Theology of a Classless Society*, Guildford: Lutterworth Press, 1979.

[8] Chapman, 'Social,' 241. And the others are: the doctrine of the Trinity as alternative to monotheism; the principle of diversity in unity; direct correlation between the being of God and the being of the world and society; and the social being of the Trinity as a model for our social being or as answer to the problems of individualism and collectivism.

[9] See Holmes, *Trinity*, 21, 25, 29 et al.

[10] Holmes, *Trinity*, 21. Cf. Moltmann, *Trinity*, 150, 174f.

[11] Holmes, *Trinity*, 14, especially in reference to Zizioulas' saying that '[i]n a more analytical way this means that God, as *Father* and not as substance, perpetually confirms through "being" His *free* will to exist' (*Being*, 41).

challenges to his arguments, especially by John Colwell,[12] Holmes assures his readers that it is a historical objection that he is making against social trinitarianism, rather than a systematic one, that is to say, not that 'you cannot be a social trinitarian' but that '"if you are a social Trinitarian, you are separating yourself decisively from a remarkably united traditional witness".'[13] The historical claim appears no less strong than the systematic because no one would develop a theory of the Trinity that has no historical basis. In any case, we are not interested in the question about social trinitarianism itself,[14] but whether Gunton is a social trinitarian in the sense considered by the critics above and therefore one whose understanding and statement of the doctrine of the Trinity is separated from the teaching of the Bible and the traditional witness.[15] The answer that is being attempted in what follows is that there may well be a sense in which Gunton is a social trinitarian but not in one of those regarded by his critics as common features of the contemporary social trinitarianism: (1) God as *communion*; (2) a communion of *persons* as distinct subjects with distinct wills; and (3) communion of divine persons as a *collective*, bound by the mutual love among its members, that can be paralleled by human society.[16]

2.1.1. God as communion

The first response to any critique of Gunton's theology of communion as a sort of social trinitarianism is to highlight the need to reckon with the fact that he consciously maintains a certain distance from the social approach itself,[17] unlike those who promote

[12] 'A conversation overheard: reflecting on the Trinitarian grammar of intimacy and substance,' in Thomas A. Noble and Jason S. Sexton (eds), *The Holy Trinity Revisited: Essays in response to Stephen R. Holmes*, Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2015, 97–109.
[13] Holmes, 'Response,' in Noble and Sexton, *Trinity*, 149.
[14] McCall, *Trinity?*, 11–50, provides a survey of the discussion of social trinitarianism from an analytic perspective, treating it as one of three answers to the threeness-oneness problem ("Social Trinitarianism," "Relative Trinitarianism" and "Latin Trinitarianism"). Interestingly, Gunton does not feature in McCall's discussion of social trinitarianism, while his works appear as an important support to the writer's thesis on the relation of God and the world. See *Trinity?*, 136, 162, 210, 247f. Cf. also, Sarah Coakley, '"Persons" in the "Social" Doctrine of the Trinity: A Critique of Current Analytic Discussion,' in S. T. Davis, D. Kendall SJ and G. O'Collins SJ (eds), *The Trinity: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Trinity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, 123–44.
[15] Kilby comments that her argument is not directed against social analogies themselves because 'in themselves these analogies are perhaps no *worse* than any other,' adding that what concerns her deeply are rather 'the way in which they are very often used' and 'the claims which are made for them' ('Perichoresis,' 433. Emphasis added).
[16] Alan Brown, 'On the Criticism of Being as Communion in Anglophone Orthodox Theology,' in Douglas H. Knight, *The Theology of John Zizioulas*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007, 41–5, offers a defence of John Zizioulas against critical treatments of Zizioulas as a social trinitarian.
[17] See *PTT* xix–xx and 198, for example.

explicitly "social" programmes.[18] Such a distance is seen in the following passage that comes a page before Gunton saying that 'God is what he is only as a communion of persons,'[19] which is the main feature of social trinitarianism for critics like Fermer, as mentioned above:[20]

> I think that it is important in this context to beware of the apparently tritheist tendencies of some of what are called social theories of the Trinity. We are not licensed by revelation to speak of a social life; we are, however, to say that if the Spirit works in a particular way in the economy as the one who perfects the creation, it is reasonable to suppose that he has a similar kind of function to perform in relation to the being of God, to the communion that is the life of God.[21]

This passage, especially the first half, clearly shows how Gunton tries to keep a distance from the social approach to the Trinity, with full awareness of its danger of tritheism. What is also plainly shown is Gunton's intent, which is not to speak of a "social" life of God even from revelation, but to pursue the theological implications of the distinctive work of the Spirit in the economy. Therefore, any treatment of Gunton's work as a branch of social trinitarianism without considering the distance he keeps his work from social approaches as seen in this passage can be treated as too simplistic and dismissed as a forced classification.

That said, in one instance, Gunton does appear to endorse the classification of his theology as a social Trinity by saying of his work that '(although) there is developed in this book what can be called a social rather than a psychological approach.'[22] This could be used to support a treatment of Gunton as a social trinitarian, though it is not mentioned or used by any critics. Even if they had used it, however, they would have had to reckon with what Gunton says in the main clause of the passage from which the above-mentioned sentence comes. For there, referring to both the psychological approach and the social, he says that 'those ways of speaking are highly inadequate.'[23] It

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[18] E.g., Cornelius Plantinga Jr., 'Social Trinity,' 21–47; Richard Swinburne, *The Christian God*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994; and Stephen T. Davis, 'Perichoretic Monotheism: A Defence of a Social Theory of the Trinity,' in Melville Y. Stewart (ed.), *The Trinity: East/West Dialogue*, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003, 35–52; Edward Wierenga, 'Trinity and Polytheism,' *Faith and Philosophy* 21, 2004 (3), 281–94; William Hasker, *Metaphysics and the Tri-personal God*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
[19] *OTM* 191.
[20] This is a good place to see whether Fermer's reading of Gunton takes due consideration of the context of a passage he uses against Gunton, the same approach whereby Fermer criticises Gunton and Zizioulas over their interpretation of the controversial passage in Basil's *Letter*, 38.4, as we will see later.
[21] *OTM* 190.
[22] *PTT* 195.
[23] Ibid.

follows that Gunton has developed a social rather than a psychological approach, despite knowing that both approaches are problematic.[24] A common problem mentioned by him is a static view of dogmatic development that takes the two approaches as alternatives, corresponding to an equally static view of the classical doctrine of the Trinity as 'a "model," developed in its entirety in the past.'[25]

It is quite plausible, given the ambiguity between Gunton's choice of the word "social" and the distance he maintains from social approaches, that the choice is made out of need, or as a mere adjustment to the known framework, rather than as the exact term for his approach. This possibility will be discussed in more detail later. It suffices here to anticipate it by highlighting the following four aspects discussed thus far. (1) Gunton is nowhere as acquiescent to the psychological approach as he is to the social approach, being particularly critical of the former due to the need to conceive the divine threeness as revealed in the economy.[26] (2) It may be only that distance from the psychological approach that brings his work closer to the social, because he works within the framework in which they are the only two options available.[27] (3) The reason that the social is chosen is then not because it is devoid of a problem but, perhaps, only because it fits better with the need to conceive the distinctness of the three. (4) His aim is yet not to elaborate a theory about the social life of God, but rather to participate in the process of conceptual clarification that began with the early Christian thinkers by reflecting on the implications of the action of God in the economy for our understanding of the being of God.[28]

2.1.2. Persons

Critics of Gunton tend to treat his theological use of "person" as a symptom of social trinitarianism, mostly from a perspective, such as they find in Barth, that prefers its use for divine unity or oneness, yet without engaging in the actual process which Gunton's thought has passed through. Even in his first book, Gunton took note of Barth's wish to avoid the traditional use of "person" for each member of the Trinity and, rather, use the

[24] *PTT* 194. This makes it difficult to answer the question whether or to what extent Gunton is using "social" as a synonym to "relational" rather than "a community of three persons." But more on this at §2.1.3.
[25] *PTT* 194. 'There is,' to repeat, 'not a "model" known as trinitarian doctrine, a fixed set of formularies, but rather a process of intellectual development—a tradition—during the course of which a number of conceptual possibilities have been shaped' (195).
[26] *PTT* 42–8.
[27] *PTT* 195.
[28] *PTT* 194f and 11. Also, 'Trinity,' 953f.

word for the one God and the phrase "mode of being" for what is usually referred to by person, resulting in the concept of God as one person who exists in three modes of being.[29] However, with further development of thought, Gunton concludes that Barth's proposal is unsatisfactory for two reasons: it 'makes it impossible to redeem the concept of person from its modern individualistic usage' and it 'replicates the Western tendency to make the Trinity practically redundant by depriving the persons of distinctive forms of agency.'[30] Gunton's own proposal is not to use "person" for Barth's *Seinsweise,*[31] or to use the latter as an equivalent of person, but to maintain the traditional use of person for the Greek *hypostasis*, and the "way of being" for τρόπος ὑπάρξεως as referring to 'the way in which the persons are who they particularly are.'[32] Despite the terminological difference, however, there is continuity in content and purpose. If Barth's desire to use "person" for the one God rather than for each member of the Trinity is against tritheism it is *despite* the danger of tritheism that Gunton wants to maintain the use of the word for each member of the Trinity for the sake of the distinct modes of divine actions that are recorded in the Bible. Yet Gunton knows that Barth is also wary of modalism,[33] having no doubt at all about Barth's intent 'to express by this term [*Seinsweise*], not absolutely, but relatively better and more simply and clearly the same thing as is meant by "person".'[34] In that sense, Gunton trod a narrow path, with tritheism and modalism on either side, just as Barth did before him.

The concept of person, theological application of which is so problematic for the critics of social trinitarianism, is that of the person as an individual subject with distinct consciousness, personality, volition, intellect and so on.[35] Critics tend to think that Gunton is one of those who think of the trinitarian persons in such terms.[36] Interestingly, however, that is the very usage from which Gunton wanted to separate the concept of person—interesting because it gives the impression that that is the only concept of

[29] See *BB* 139, 141f, with reference to Barth, *Dogmatics* I.1., 350f. Equally critical of using the word "person" for similar reasons to Barth's is Karl Rahner who wants to see the three persons of the Trinity as 'three distinct manners of subsisting.' Cf. *Trinity*, 104–13.
[30] *OTM* 191 n.11. Barth, *Dogmatics* I.1., 355–9.
[31] Barth's *Seinsweise* can be translated into "way of being" or "mode of being." The editors of the 1972 edition of *Church Dogmatics* explain that Barth himself indicated that the phrase "way of being" might be a better rendering to avoid any hint of tritheism, but they thought it best to preserve the initial rendering "mode of being" for his intention to refer back to the τρόπος ὑπάρξεως and the *modus entis* of Protestant Orthodoxy. 'Editors' Preface,' *Church Dogmatics* I.1., viii, as cited in *BB* 141.
[32] Ibid.
[33] See *BB* 141.
[34] *BB* 141. Barth, *Dogmatics* I.1., 359.
[35] Cf. Kilby, 'Perichoresis,' 434. Holmes, *Trinity*, 14.
[36] Cf. Plantinga, 'Social,' 22; Swinburne, *Christian*, 189; and Davis, 'Perichoretic,' 44f.

person the critics of Gunton as a social trinitarian have, which therefore cannot be applied to the persons of the Trinity. Nowhere, however, does Gunton say that Father, Son and Spirit are persons in such a sense of the person as an individual subject with distinct wills. What we find, rather, is his speaking of communion with awareness of one danger: 'a form of tritheism that appears to relate the three persons in such a way as to suggest that they have distinct wills.'[37] As a consequence, when Gunton speaks of God as communion, he does so on the firm ground of the ontological unity of the three persons as one God.[38] This position would be untenable, though, both for those who hold to a non-trinitarian view in which three *persons* can only be three *beings* and for those who suggest a trinitarian programme that can take "ontological" only in relation to *ousia*, substance or essence and not *hypostasis* or person.[39]

In later works, however, Gunton indeed speaks of "two wills" and "three wills,"[40] which again, interestingly, is not mentioned by any of Gunton's critics as making him a social trinitarian. This is mentioned here, despite the risk of complicating the matter, because of the appearance of an apparent conflict within Gunton himself. Previously, Gunton took note of tritheism as one danger of the concept of communion, that is, a form of tritheism that relates three persons in such a way as to suggest that they have distinct wills. Now, in his focused discourse on will in *Act and Being*, he appears to move in the opposite direction by saying, 'There appear to be at least two wills in action here and a third if it is not too fanciful to speak of the Spirit's willing Jesus' act.'[41] Gunton also mentions 'three wills in utterly concerted action,'[42] though that is in reference to the unified action of God carried out by the mediation of the Son and the Spirit. The complexity might indicate a change in position, or a conflict of arguments, or a contradiction between the two. Any of these would be the case, however, only if on both occasions "will" is used in the same sense and for the same purpose. This is not the case, however. Regarding purpose, in his first work Gunton opposes the idea of the three persons having distinct wills because of the danger of tritheism. In the later work, however, he advances the idea of each person having a distinct will for the sake of maintaining the distinct modes of divine action in the economy. When we put them in

[37] *PTT* 198.
[38] A point neglected by Mackey when he says, 'Colin Gunton seems to think that he will avoid that charge if he rejects the idea that the three persons have three wills, and talks instead of such interanimation of Father, Son and Spirit, that what is done is done by all three' ('Alternatives?', 69).
[39] As we shall see some examples in the next chapter.
[40] Cf. *AB* 30f; *CF* 109f.
[41] *AB* 30.
[42] *AB* 31.

order, we have Gunton's argument for three wills based on the foundation of the ontological unity of the three laid by rejecting a form of tritheism. Hence two different purposes, not standing against each other in conflict or contradiction, but related in such a way that one follows or presupposes the other. As for the sense, Gunton's use of "will" in the later work has a qualified meaning of 'person in action, rather than attribute.'[43] In the former work, on the other hand, in which he opposes the idea of the three persons having distinct wills, Gunton appears to use "will" in a sense whose validity he challenges in the later work, i.e., "will" meaning 'an attribute conceived as a kind of entity or object, hypostatized in a personal being and possessed by the person.'[44] If he speaks of three wills in the latter sense of "will," possessed by an individualistically conceived person, the result would be a social Trinity of the kind pictured by the critics, and the existence of an unexplained change or unrecognized contradiction in Gunton's work. If, however, even his arguing for three wills is done within the boundary of the ontological unity of the three persons as one God, and not three gods as would be the case had he used "will" in the former sense, any treatment that links Gunton to social trinitarianism just because he speaks of God as a communion of *three persons* could hardly be anything but a mistake. If "will" is an attribute conceived as a kind of entity Gunton's position is firm: 'God can have only one will: the idea of three divine wills is problematic for all kinds of reasons.'[45]

2.1.3. Sociality

It can hardly be correct to present Gunton as promoting a concept of divine *community* in the sense of 'a social "fellowship" which might be paralleled by human society.'[46] One reason is considered above, namely that he does not use the word "person" in theology in the specific sense of an individual subject with distinct will and intellect. Another is concerned with the difficulty of finding a place where he says that the *community* of the three persons is a kind of social fellowship that can be paralleled by a

[43] *AB* 31. Speaking against the doctrine of the two wills in Christ, a human and a divine, Gunton presents arguments that: natures do not have wills; only persons have wills; yet it is a mistake to make will into a kind of distinct entity or object within a person of such a kind that one person can have two of them; will is not an attribute of nature but rather 'person in action,' or 'a description of a personal agent engaging in a certain form of action' (*AB* 28–31).
[44] Ibid.
[45] *AB* 27.
[46] Fermer, 'Limits,' 165.

human society.[47] For their arguments, critics tend to rely only on those places where Gunton speaks of God as a communion of persons, giving the appearance that a mere verbal similarity between communion and sociality is enough for them to link the two as equivalent, or that their readings of Gunton are determined by a preunderstanding of social trinitarianism.

In any case, in the absence of other materials used by his critics, I suggest the following three as possible responses to their treatment of Gunton's work as promoting a concept of divine community from an ideal of human society. The first is to confirm what is discussed previously,[48] that it is within the boundary of the ontological unity of the three persons as one God that Gunton speaks of the communion of the three persons, still on guard against the tritheistic danger of social theories of the Trinity. Secondly, the parallel between God and his creation in Gunton's work is mainly conceptual and indirect, rather than ontological and direct. Thirdly, the conceptual paralleling operates in a certain direction, namely from the divine being to the created being, and not the other way around, as will be discussed in more detail when we come to a discussion of the issue of projection.

One may argue that what Gunton says is one thing and what he does is quite another. We can consider such a probability by looking at a place where he speaks of "human sociality" in relation to the "social" being of God:

> In what sense may we understand and live the confession that the human race, male and female together, is called to embody in the world a likeness to the deity? How is it that this image is restored and perfected in Christ, the second Adam? In other words: what form of human *sociality* best echoes the *social* being of God and embodies the truth of the creation?[49]

This passage, especially the last sentence, could have been used by the critics of Gunton to indicate that he is indeed a social trinitarian. For us, however, it has significance as a place where we can confirm the points made above. In it, firstly, Gunton looks for a form of human sociality *from* the social being of God, which confirms the third point above about the direction of Gunton's thought movement being from God to the world. He looks for a form of sociality from knowing the being of God first, not advancing an

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[47] For a possible example of such an idea as supposed by Fermer, see C. Plantinga, 'Gregory of Nyssa and the Social Analogy of the Trinity,' *The Thomist* 50, 1986, 325–52, which has an account of 'Father, Son and Spirit' as 'related to each other in some central ways analogous, if sublimely surpassing, relations among the members of a society of three human persons' (325 n.1).
[48] §2.1.2.
[49] *AA* 182. Emphasis added.

idea of the social being of God from a notion of human sociality.[50] Secondly, the use of "echo" confirms the point that the parallel between God and the world in Gunton is conceptual and indirect, rather than ontological and direct. The correlation in the passage is between God and human sociality, that is, between a being and an idea, not between one being and another. Thirdly, ontologically speaking, the parallel is between God's being and human being, the latter individually or together, rather than between God and society. While for Gunton humans are 'essentially' and 'irreducibly' social beings,[51] nowhere does he say that God is a social being in the sense that God is not an individual being. If we use those terms one would have to say that God is both social and individual, only though Gunton does not use the terms for the idea that he expresses instead by using the one and the many.[52] The point here is that, even when Gunton speaks of the "social" being of God, he is speaking about "one" God, not three Gods, and he is not proposing thereby a divine sociality made of three deities parallel to a fellowship of three human persons and opposed to an "individual" being of God.

2.2. Gunton and Projection

Critiques of Gunton as a social theorist pave the way for other criticisms to follow, as noted previously, one of which is the charge of projection.[53] Kilby argues that the existence of a high level of projection in contemporary social theories of the Trinity as she finds is not accidental but so built into the nature of this system that the social theorists have to be projectionist.[54] Kilby does not deny that projection might have a role to play in theology. Her point is that in the contemporary social theologies projection plays 'a distinctive, and a distinctively problematic, one.'[55] She considers the following five features to be key elements of projection in today's social theories, which are all relevant to a discussion of Gunton's work:[56] (1) Social theorists share the idea that the point of the doctrine of the Trinity is to give a particular insight into God; (2) they model God on three human persons understood according to an individual author's or the larger society's ideal for how we should live together in community; (3) to resolve the quandary that the three divine persons should be one God, they resort to something beyond human understanding, like *perichoresis*, just because they do not

[50] A point to be made against the criticism of Gunton's work as projectionist, which is discussed at §2.2.
[51] Cf. *PTT* 167; *OTM* 220.
[52] See, for example, *OTM* 141.
[53] Other than Kilby, see also Fermer, 'Limits,' 184.
[54] Kilby, 'Perichoresis,' 439 and 441.
[55] Ibid.
[56] As given in Kilby, 'Perichoresis,' 439–43.

want to be tritheist; (4) they explain, in turn, the 'alien' idea in terms of 'those things which do to some degree bind human persons together into couples or families or communities—interrelatedness, love, empathy, mutual accord, mutual giving and so on; and (5) they project what is projected onto God immediately back onto the human world, with an illegitimate claim for authority.[57] Given that Kilby includes Gunton in the group of those theologians against whom she makes these points, one might wish to see whether they are correct representations of his work, even partially, if not completely. What follows are brief responses to each of the five points, arguing that while they are indeed Kilby's problems with social doctrines of the Trinity, they are not exactly the problems residing or identifiable in Gunton's work itself.

1. Gunton is certainly interested in the doctrine of the Trinity, yet nowhere says or implies that its point is to provide a particular insight into the being of God. We rather find him saying, 'the value of the theology of the Trinity lies more in enabling a rethinking of the topics of theology and culture than in offering a privileged view of the being of God.'[58] Critics may point to Gunton's speaking of God in terms of communion and perichoresis as a symptom of projection or a desire to know more than is licensed by revelation. For Gunton, however, the idea of God as communion or perichoresis is what he has received from the trinitarian tradition, as noted previously.[59] Indeed, in his transcendental project, Gunton takes the concept of communion and perichoresis drawn from the doctrine of the Trinity for further thinking and speaking of the being of the world and the human being.[60] In that sense, one can say, for Gunton the Trinity is a source of transcendental exploration into other areas of being and relation. In the same sense, therefore, it is a mistake to treat him as one who regards the point of the doctrine of the Trinity as giving a particular insight into God.

[57] Kilby, 'Perichoresis,' 442. See also Chapman, 'social,' 248.
[58] *PTT* xxix.
[59] See *OTM* 152, and §2.1.
[60] Cf. *OTM* 166–73 (perichoresis); 214–9 (communion).

2. Gunton's God as a communion of the three persons is not modelled on three human persons understood according to his own ideal of a good society.[61] He does speak of God as a communion of persons, and yet that is according to his reception of the Christian tradition, especially from the Cappadocian Fathers. He may be mistaken in his understanding of their works, as some argue, and as will be discussed later in more detail. Even if he mistook them, however, the point being made here would not be affected. To repeat, Gunton's God as a communion of three persons is not modelled on three human persons by his own or latest ideal of how human beings should live together, but only according to his reception of the tradition that he believes is established upon the biblical witness to the anteceding revelation of the Father in the Son through the Spirit.[62] The three concerned are Father, Son and Spirit, to be precise, not three divine *persons* modelled on three human *persons*. While Gunton uses the word "person" of the divine and the human, the theological use is primary, meaning that his understanding of the human follows, not precedes, that of the divine. For Gunton, to go a step further, the word "person" is always posterior to the real person of whom it is used. In other words, Father, Son and Spirit are prior to, and so in control of, the meaning of the word "person" used in reference to them.

3. Gunton's reason for appealing to the Patristic concept of perichoresis is *not to work out* the quandary of how one God is three or vice versa, a question for him that is addressed and answered by the Cappadocian theologians in their responses to Arians and Eunomians.[63] Nor does he appeal to the concept of perichoresis as something beyond human understanding. Perichoresis is a human word created for human understanding, though created under the impact and guidance of revelation and inspiration.[64] It is, as such, that Gunton further develops an analogical concept of perichoresis to express an aspect of the reality of God on the basis of the knowledge of

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[61] Projection in this sense is one whereby Kilby explains the difference between Moltmann and Wilson-Kastner on their views of the person drawn from the doctrine of the Trinity. 'Perichoresis,' 440–3. On the other hand, Holmes, *Trinity*, 27 has three explanations for a similar kind of difference between Zizioulas and Volf on their visions of the church, yet not including projection: (a) results of 'employing different doctrines of the Trinity;' (b) indication of 'an error in argument from Trinity to church in at least one' of them; and (c) evidence that 'ecclesiological programmes cannot in fact be derived from Trinitarian dogma and the assumption that they can is a methodological flaw shared by both Zizioulas and Volf.' While Kilby's explanation by projection is too simplistic to be taken seriously, it is not too difficult to see that Holmes' explanations have more relevance to Gunton's method, as we will see later.
[62] Relevant biblical passages might include John 5:19–20; 15:26–27; 1 John 1:1; Gal 1:11–12; Eph 3:2–6.
[63] For the Cappadocian treatment of the issue of one God or three Gods, cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *To Albabius: On "Not Three Gods"* (*NPNF* vol. 5, 331–6); Gregory of Nazianzen, *On the Holy Spirit* (*NPNF* vol. 7, 318–28). Behr, *Formation* 2/2, 360–70 is an explication of the latter, and 427–35 of the former. Cf. also, Stead, 'Why not Three Gods?', 149–63.
[64] *OTM* 164.

God given in the economy.[65] Involved in the creation of such a word is a kind of process in which a word is chosen and refined by the mind interacting with the object which the word will refer to, rather than one in which a word is chosen, defined and applied directly to speaking of God in the predefined sense. For Gunton, it is a thought process that began with the early theologians, resulting in a group of words that may be used for speaking of the revealed God and offering some answers to the basic questions. Gunton's interest is not in dealing with a question that has already been answered or creating a new term to describe the being of God anew. It is, rather, in continuing the process of conceptual clarification that has already begun by his predecessors, by posing his own questions such as 'whether the concepts developed in trinitarian theology enable us not only to conceive the reality of God, but also have transcendental possibilities, and so enable us to come to terms with the fundamental shape of being.'[66]

4. Therefore, Gunton's account of the idea of perichoresis is not an explanation of a new idea introduced by him but is given as part of an established doctrine known to others too.[67] As he notes, Barth refers to the doctrine of perichoresis as expressing the state of affairs in which 'the divine modes of being mutually condition and permeate one another so completely that one is always in the other two and the other two in the one.'[68] Gunton himself uses similar terms to explain the concept of perichoresis as 'a way of showing the ontological interdependence and reciprocity of the three persons of the Trinity.'[69] The continuity and similarity between Gunton and Barth concerning the meaning of perichoresis raises a question as to whether the critics of Gunton's work as a projection are in effect also criticising Barth's, a question to which an answer cannot be found in Kilby's work. If Kilby treats Barth differently from Gunton in this matter simply because the former has a different response to a problem of which Gunton is also aware the question rises as to what she would say about Barth regarding projection, if we are correct in saying that his understanding of perichoresis is not much different

[65] *OTM* 162.
[66] *PTT* 140f. See also *OTM* 153.
[67] *OTM* 152. Hence, for Gunton, the *doctrine* of perichoresis. The first reference to perichoresis in Gunton appears in *BB* 145–8, where it is mentioned in explicating Barth's theology as appealing to the established doctrine of *perichoresis* or *circuminsessio* for the state of affairs in which God is both one and three, unity and trinity.
[68] Barth, *Dogmatics* I.1., 370, as cited in *BB* 146.
[69] *OTM* 152.

from Gunton's, being much more similar than they are different with regard to their uses of the word "person."[70]

5. If Gunton's theology is not a projection his transcendental project can hardly be taken as a *reverse* projection. Indeed, the project has an element of projection, because it involves a process in which the concepts generated by theology are "projected" onto understanding other things. But that is a projection in its broadest sense.[71] In such a narrow sense as we find in his critics, however, Gunton is also aware of the problem of reverse projection (or 'idealism') as well as projection. He sees the former, for example, in premature appeals to the social analogy put forward to support a particular vision of society and those books in the Hegelian tradition which tie the work of the divine Spirit with the immanent patterns of modern history and social development.[72] There argues Gunton, not against the necessity of the ontology of God, but only for the need of a process of intermediate argumentation, because 'moves from the immanent Trinity to the created world are not obvious, and are fraught with dangers of idealizing and projection.'[73] What Kilby is in effect arguing, then, is that Gunton is engaging in a practice that he wants to avoid. While Gunton's transcendental exploration of perichoresis is the major ground of her argument, she provides no other reason than her own view that in social theories the concept of perichoresis is projected onto God from the human and then projected back onto the human. This, however, is too simple, or too broad, a description to be applied to Gunton in any meaningful way for three reasons. First, Gunton has not created the word perichoresis and its meaning but has received both the term and its meaning from the past, as discussed above. Secondly, the initial process involved is not that of creating the word by pure projection from the mind but rather of creating a notion of it by the mind's interaction with the divine reality revealed in the economy of creation and salvation. Thirdly, the practice of correlating divine being and the human by the mediation of language is not wholly new: its root goes back

[70] See Kilby's discussion in 'Perichoresis,' 433, who puts Gunton among the group she calls social theorists, while treating Barth (and Rahner) as outsiders to the group, for the reason that Barth wants to abandon the use of "persons" for the three of the Trinity because of the danger of tritheism: 'when we hear "three persons" we inevitably think of three separate "I"s, three centres of consciousness, three distinct wills and so on.' This is a point that draw Gunton's attention already in his first book.
[71] That is, for instance, we create a word in reference to a thing and then apply (or project) the same word to naming all other things of the same kind.
[72] See *PTT* xx, 171; *FSS* 23.
[73] *PTT* xx. Gunton, thus, treads on a relatively narrow path marked by two dangers lying on each side. On the one side is the danger of the over-simplification of limiting theological enquiry to the economic or historical Trinity. On the other is the danger of the superficiality of using the immanent or ontological Trinity to validate causes believed to be worthy ones.

to the times of biblical authors who even recorded 'Be holy, for I am holy,'[74] which is a divine command as to what the people of God should be based on what God is.[75]

2.2.2. Projection for Gunton

Gunton has not produced a response to the charge of his work for projection. Nor has he provided a separate treatment of the question of projection, perhaps because it is not so vital an issue compared to others, but not because he has no problem with it. There are at least four forms of projection about which he is cautious that his critics need to take into consideration: (1) projection from anything of the world; (2) projection by negation of the world; (3) projection by affirmation of the world in eminence; and (4) projection from the economy. There are two respects in which knowing these forms of projection in Gunton would be helpful for making further responses to criticisms of his work as projectionist: they show the senses in which Gunton is also critical of the problem of projection; and failing to take them into consideration can lead to an awkward situation such as that in which he is criticised either for the points that he is aware of or for the points that he has made against others. That said, space will not allow us to look at all four of them. In what follows discussion is limited to the first two because while there are some points to make about them to counter the charge of projection which has been levelled to Gunton's work, the other two do not need to be addressed for that purpose.[76]

Projection from anything of the world

This is a type of projection that Gunton briefly touches on by introducing Xenophanes' critiques of the Homeric gods. First is the charge of anthropomorphism: 'Homer and Hesiod have attributed to the gods everything that is a shame and reproach among men, stealing and committing adultery and deceiving each other.'[77] Then that of projection: 'The Ethiopians say that their gods are snub-nosed and black, the Thracians that theirs have light blue eyes and red hair.'[78] Gunton's reason for introducing them is not to say something particularly about projection but to show how Greek philosophy came under

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[74] Lev 11:45. Cf. 19:2; 1 Pet 1:15–16.

[75] Cf. also, Matt 5:48 for being "perfect" and Luke 6:36 for being "merciful." For an act, John 15:9 and 1 John 4:11. For Gunton's brief comment on the last passage in the context of discussing two accounts of the language used of divinity, see *AB* 69–71.

[76] While the first two appear in Gunton's survey of the negative theology, as we will see, the third can be identified in his treatment of the theology of Hartshorne in comparison to that of Barth in *Becoming and Being*, and the last in his engagement with the theology of Jürgen Moltmann in various places on the question of the cross and suffering. Cf. *CC* 86–9; *AB* 130f and 124–32.

[77] Xenophanes, *Fragment* 11, as cited in *AB* 39 from G. S. Kirk and J. E. Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957, 168.

[78] Xenophanes, *Fragment* 16.

pressure to "the impersonal" and "the intellectual" and "the negative" by beginning with critiques of anthropomorphism and projectionism of the old religions. Our reason for looking at that brief part of Gunton's work is to use the kind of projection criticised by Xenophanes in order to establish Gunton's wariness of the first type of projection, that is, projection onto God from anything of the world according to an individual's, or society's, likes, dislikes, desires, wishes or fears. For Gunton, this is a kind of projection that is criticised not only by Greek philosophers but also in Scripture and even by modern thinkers.[79] As such, it would be needless to defend him against a charge that relates him to that sort of practice. Kilby, however, gives the misguiding impression that we need to do so, by treating Gunton as one of the contemporary social theorists that she criticises in similar words to those with which Xenophanes criticises projectionism. To repeat her words, 'much of the detail is derived from either the individual author's or the larger society's latest ideals of how human beings should live in community.'[80] What can be said in response is not only that Gunton is critically aware of this sort of projection but also that he is perhaps more critical of it than is his critic. As he says, 'Nice, polite westerners may project a deity who is moderately feminist and in favour of ecological responsibility and all worthy things, *but if the matter is down to the one who projects, there is no end to the demons which can be let loose*.'[81] It is not that Gunton has changed his position after receiving a charge of projection such as Kilby's. As far as this first type of projection is concerned, his wariness of it is already shown not least in the works discussed by her.[82]

Projection by negation of the world

It is one thing to find fault with a system and another to succeed in providing an alternative. That is the light in which Gunton puts Xenophanes' own theology that is built upon a critique of the theology of old religions. In Gunton's view, that is to say, Xenophanes' theology is not a solution but a beginning of new problems. One difficulty is concerned with Xenophanes's God as 'universal mind,'[83] which is echoed in Aristotle's concept of the being of God as 'thought contemplating itself.'[84] The problem

[79] See *AB* 55 and 62.
[80] Kilby, 'Perichoresis,' 441.
[81] *AB* 93. Emphasis added. This is introduced here because of the content, yet the context in which it is actually said is that where he criticises negative theology, followed by the saying 'Salvation depends on the unflinching affirmation that the God who meets us in the Son and the Spirit is the only God there is.'
[82] Cf. *OTM* 139 and *PTT* 90, where Gunton refers to the critique associated with Feuerbach that the concept of God is projected from the worldly marks.
[83] *AB* 40, referring to Eric Osborne, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, 34.
[84] Ibid.

is not the concept of God as mind or intellect itself so much as that it is conceived in abstraction from, rather than directed to, God's involvement in the material world. The second problem concerns Xenophanes' God as 'the mere negation of the finite,'[85] which echoes Anaximander's description of the *arche* of things as the *apeiron* ('the infinite or unbounded' or 'the indefinite')[86] and is fully blown by the time of Plotinus whose the One is 'a shapeless form … indescribable … no name can be appropriate to it … simply "the not this".'[87] Nor is the problem here the negative itself, but its employment in such a way as to leave no room for the positive, resulting in an uncomfortable implication: 'we cannot, if we take this to be a universal rule, attribute even goodness and love to God as an inhering, inner quality.'[88]

What does Greek philosophy, then, have to do with projection when it is considered to have begun with a critique of projection in old theologies? Gunton's answers to the question are not found in his survey of Greek philosophy but in his review of a strand of Christian negative theology that developed under its influence. Discussing Origen, Dionysius, John of Damascus and Aquinas,[89] Gunton considers the following problems in their works that we might take as his answers to our question. Firstly, the negative way that he sees in them is not a denial of theology but a different way of doing theology, beginning with worldly attributes, then negating them and finally predicating the negated of the being of God: for example, God is *in*finite and *im*material because the world is finite and material.[90] Secondly, there are in control of them some metaphysical principles by which much of Greek philosophy operated, such as dualism, hierarchy and causality, according to which, for example, 'the lower levels of reality mirror but dimly the divine reality which presides over them, while the higher levels—the "spiritual" and

[85] *AB* 41, in reference to Edward Caird, *The Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophies*, Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1904, 62.
[86] Ibid.
[87] *AB* 43, as cited from J. M. Rist, *Plotinus: The Road to Reality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967, 25. Frederic C. Copleston is also cited saying 'God is absolutely transcendent. … Neither essence nor being nor life can be predicated of the One … Moreover, we can legitimately ascribe to the One neither thought nor will nor activity' (*A History of Philosophy: Vol I Greece and Rome*, London: Burns & Oates, 1946, 464f).
[88] *AB* 44. Cf. also, *AB* 41f, for Gunton's account of Plato as an example that there are other features of the development than the merely negative.
[89] See *AB* 44–54. Among those discussed by Gunton are the conception of spirit by the denial of bodilessness and materiality (Origen), relentless concentration on 'the analogically reached doctrine that God is essentially what the world is not' (Dionysius), the negatives piled one upon another before anything positive is said (John of Damascus), and the dictum that 'we cannot know what God is, but only what He is not' (Aquinas).
[90] Projection in Gunton's words: 'we take what we believe to be characteristic of finite persons, and project this on to God by a process of denying what we take to be the marks of deficiency and elevating their supposedly positive features to infinity' (*AB* 137).

intellectual; that is, the non-material—mirror them more brightly.'[91] Thus the material things are only used to reach for the immediate only to be kicked away.[92] Thirdly, the negative way is not wholly negative but behind its unassuming mask lies 'a movement for unity with God,'[93] or 'an almost Promethean aspiration to unity with the divine.' [94] As Pseudo-Dionysius says, 'my argument now rises from what is below up to the transcendent, and the more it climbs, the more language falters, and when it has passed up and beyond the ascent, it will turn silent completely, since it will finally be at one with him who is indescribable.'[95] Fourthly, the system of predication operating in them is that which, Gunton says, 'works by projection from below rather than by response to particular historical revelation within the structures of time and space.'[96] It is a system, in other words, that reaches a concept of God by 'a process of unmediated ascent—unmediated, at any rate, by anything material like the human Christ.'[97] Problematic for Gunton is the outcome, which is an understanding of God that sits ill with 'a knowledge of God the Father mediated through his Son'[98] and a 'concept of God whose being is known primarily through his historical and particular action.'[99] Finally, while Scripture could have been a corrective to the dominance of the impersonal, the intellectual, the negative and the cosmological considerations, biblical passages tended to be chosen and used 'woodenly' as proof-texts.[100] 'The economy and revelation,' says Gunton, 'have been placed in a straightjacket by a conception of divine being constructed a priori.'[101]

Gunton's awareness of these problems concerning negative theology has significance for our discussion, namely, as a possible response from him to a treatment of his work as projectionist from a restrictive perspective that is similar to what he finds in negative theology.[102] That is, his positive statements about the being of God are not made in ignorance of the limits of theology but, rather, in due recognition that the negative way

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[91] *AB* 62.
[92] *AB* 63.
[93] Ibid.
[94] *AB* 65. Reference is made to Paul Rorem saying, 'The way of negation is the way of union' (*Pseudo-Dionysius: A Commentary on the Texts and an Introduction to Their Influence*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993, 165f).
[95] *AB* 64, as cited from *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, tr. Colm Luibheid, London: SPCK, 1987, 139. Cf. also, 100 cited in *AB* 17.
[96] *AB* 62.
[97] *AB* 63.
[98] Ibid.
[99] *AB* 40.
[100] *AB* 48.
[101] *AB* 17f.
[102] Cf. Fermer's view of Gunton's transcendental project as trespassing on apophatic theology; for Kilby, projection with an attempt to give a particular insight to God; and for Holmes, diverging from the established tradition.

is not entirely negative in that behind any operation of the negative is the action of some positive principles that operate as if tested and accepted when they are not. As we shall see later, Fermer deals with Gunton's work from a Thomistic perspective without showing its validity or superiority over that perspective from which Gunton works, which is simply assumed and asserted as a yardstick for judgment at argumentatively crucial points.[103] In the case of Kilby, as we saw, while she promotes the importance of the doctrine of the Trinity simply as a rule for reading biblical stories, thinking and talking about the experience of prayer and deploying the words of Christianity in an appropriate way,[104] it is possible to think that this is not only a suggestion that is made to follow her discussion of social theorists, but perhaps the very perspective from which they are grouped and examined in the first place. In that case, it would have been better if she had also shown the grounds on which we are urged to use the doctrine of the Trinity in such a theologically restrictive way as she suggests. For even a successful critique of social approaches to the Trinity would not necessarily support the suggestion of taking the importance of the doctrine of the Trinity as 'a kind of structuring principle of Christianity rather than as its central focus.'[105]

2.2.3. Conflict model of the Trinity

There is a programme to which any charge of projection discussed thus far might better apply than to Gunton's, and that is the conflict model of the Trinity promoted by Mark Chapman and David Nicholls.[106] Chapman's arguments are interesting for our discussion because while, like Kilby, he treats Gunton as a defender of social trinitarianism, his approach differs from hers both in his analysis of the problem and suggestions for a way forward. For Kilby, we saw, the problem of social approaches is mainly to do with projection, and she finds it especially in the social projectionists' way of speaking of perichoresis, which they tend to explain in terms of interrelatedness, love, empathy, accord, mutual giving and so on. Her corrective is to limit the use of the

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[103] 'Whereas Aquinas considered metaphysics to be the *prima philosophia*, the science of being as being, which could be conducted independently of theology, Gunton/Zizioulas wish to maintain that theology is determinative of ontology. The danger here is that we have a deficient ontology opposed [imposed?] from above' (Fermer, 'Limits,' 170f). Also, later, 'if Gunton and Zizioulas move from an ontology of God to a general ontology, they have introduced God into the subject matter of metaphysics in a way which Aquinas would never have allowed' (173).

[104] Kilby, 'Perichoresis,' 443.

[105] Kilby, 'Perichoresis,' 443. If what Kilby suggests is simply a hermeneutical use of the doctrine of the Trinity, rather than taking it as an expression of the being of God, there are other questions that need to be addressed, for example, whether the so-called "Latin Trinitarianism," which is often contrasted with "Social Trinitarianism," also needs to be overcome, given that it is also about the "being" of God: one substance and three persons (*una substantia et tres personae*).

[106] David Nicholls, 'Trinity and conflict,' *Interpretation* 37, 1993, 19–27. For Chapman's, see §2.1. n.2.

doctrine of the Trinity and take its importance as a hermeneutical principle rather than a free licence to talk about the being of God. For Chapman, talks of God in such terms as "love" and "harmony" are also problematic, yet not because they are projections but rather because they are deficient in projection, failing to fully reflect the human reality. What they express, in his view, is only a 'longing for concord and a conflict-free zone, but it seems quite divorced from the creative and constructive conflict that can plausibly be shown to be the foundation for democratic human societies.'[107] Henceforth he turns to the conflict model of the Trinity proposed by Nicholls to incorporate the reality of conflict fully into the doctrine of the Trinity. He suggests thus,

> harmony and unity may not perhaps be all there is to a good community—indeed, there might be a need for opposition, for conflict, in order to grow; and furthermore, it might even be possible to see conflict, or at the very least, tension at the heart of our picture of God.[108]

This passage, while explaining the need of conflict and the like for a good community, has three elements of projection which we saw Kilby use to criticise social analogies to the Trinity: a general view of human reality; a move from there to divine reality with that view; and the desire to draw a picture of God by that move. For discussion, we might expand them with the words from Chapman. First comes a general view of human reality that has not only harmony and balance but also 'dispute and conflict' as 'the normal and proper condition of society, and even of the Church.'[109] From that understanding of the human reality, secondly, follows a theological move, asking 'if we are to try to model the Trinity, then what place is there for the tensions and conflicts resulting from diversity and difference?'[110] With that move, thirdly, a picture of God is drawn, which in its heart has conflict, opposition, or tension, not only because they are human realities but also for the reason that they are thought to be necessary for a good community and its growth. While these elements of the conflict model of the Trinity appear perfectly fitting with the features of projection in Kilby's analysis, a more careful analysis than that would not find the problems in Gunton's work.

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[107] Chapman, 'Social,' 249.
[108] Chapman, 'Social,' 251. Things are clearer with Nicholls about what kind of conflict urged to put in the picture as he distinguishes two kinds of conflict in this: 'Not all conflict is ultimately destructive. Confrontation and conflict may be necessary conditions of progress and improvement. Although the violent and destructive conflicts in Northern Ireland or the Lebanon appear, indeed, to have no redeeming features, the confrontations and conflicts inspired and initiated by Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King had positive and beneficial results' ('Trinity,' 21).
[109] Chapman, 'Social,' 248. Speaking of the church history, Chapman says, 'Quite simply, then, had there been no conflict there would have been no orthodoxy' (249).
[110] Chapman, 'Social,' 248f.

Nicholls and Chapman appear to work with a very narrow concept of conflict, even between 'mercy and justice … to forestall an image of God in which mercy totally swaps justice.' The question is whether such an image of God is really proposed by Gunton or even the like in their review. Gunton's speaking of God as a communion of persons might be understood in terms of love, yet not in the sense in which God is only merciful and not just.[111] Besides, in the Bible, mercy and justice are used of God's relation with the world rather than of the relation between the Son and the Father or between one picture of God and another.[112] Moreover, the main picture of God in the New Testament is that of the Son doing the will of the Father in the power of the Spirit. The three are united in distinction, together working towards, for or against the world. In so far as it concerns their relations to each other, there would be no biblical support for saying that they are opposed to each other or are in conflict. They are rather depicted as unified, for example, in purifying us from all sins for our fellowship with each other (1 John 2:1. Christ defends; God forgives); providing us with a complete salvation (Heb 7:25. Christ intercedes; God saves); and holding us in the love of Christ (Rom 8:34. Christ intercedes; God justifies). Furthermore, for his disciples and those who will believe in him through their witness, Jesus prays 'that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me' (John 17:21).[113]

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[111] See, e.g., *PTT* 168, where Gunton implies what picture of God he has by saying that 'there are a number of reasons why the God worshipped by Christians is indispensable for the good ordering of a free, just and tolerant society.'

[112] 'The picture of God proclaimed by Jesus as the compassionate, loving, merciful Father, needs to be read alongside that other picture of God as judge, at least if the Gospel of Matthew is to be taken seriously: he will banish the wicked to that place where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth' (Chapman, 'Social,' 251).

[113] This Johannite concept of oneness can be put into contrast with the Synoptic report of the cry of dereliction on the cross, which for some is a definite sign of conflict between the Son and the Father. Thus is for J. Moltmann who proposes a theology of crucified God by taking the cross as 'a God event' which took place 'between Jesus and his God, between his Father and Jesus,' implying 'stasis within God,' 'God against God,' and even 'enmity between God and God' (*The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*, tr. R. A. Wilson and John Bowden, London: SCM Press, 1974, 149, 151, 205f and 227). This would be better treated if we included a third type of projection in Gunton's wariness, namely, *projection from the economy*. That said, one comment can be made here concerning Gunton's understanding of Moltmann's view of the cross as implying 'a *tritheist* denial of the unity of the divine action' (*CC* 86. Added emphasis) and its contrast with Nicholls' treatment of Moltmann's 'defence of patripassianism' as suggesting 'a failure to allow for a real distinction of the persons and a dangerous *modalist* tendency' ('Trinity,' 24. Emphasis added). That is, Gunton's comment on Moltmann applies, in fact, partially to Moltmann's work and more fully to Nicholls'. In other words, any critic of Gunton's conception of God as the persons in communion as projectionist needs to take into account that Gunton remains, more concretely and less speculatively than the others, with the biblical account of the cross in understanding it as an event that took place between Jesus and the world in a unified action of God with the man Jesus, unified towards overcoming evil and suffering in the world; in other words, 'an encounter—*the* encounter between the power of God undemonically exercised by a man and moral, social and political forces demonically exercised by others' (*AA* 76).

Having shown how Kilby's charge of projection applies better to the conflict model of the Trinity proposed by Chapman than it does to Gunton's works, we might draw a conclusion by looking at the situation as one in which we have two different views of projection and two differing approaches to the doctrine of the Trinity, the latter involving different understandings of theology. As for the matter of projection, Gunton is close to Kilby, both standing against Chapman who appears to have no issue with projection itself. For Kilby, projection is problematic in some cases, as in the case of the social approaches to the Trinity. She appears to concede that projection might have a positive role to play in theology, though she says nothing more about the sense in which it might be the case. For Gunton, however, there is no place for projection in its normal sense of drawing a picture of God from a general view of the world by the way of preference, negation or eminence. As for the doctrine of the Trinity, Chapman's approach is closer to Gunton's in their common understanding of the Trinity in terms of ontology and having implications for our understanding of other things, while Kilby might criticise any ontological understanding of the Trinity as symptomatic of projection and reverse projection. Chapman would be mistaken, however, if he thinks that Gunton has the same view of theology as his, that is, theology as "practical wisdom" which, like in politics, involves openness to change in understanding of God through practice.[114] Gunton has a similar view of theology as a "practical discipline"[115] which aims at wisdom in the sense of light to throw upon the human path. However, unlike Chapman,[116] he has little interest in modelling the inner life of God according to a particular view of reality. His understanding of the Trinity from which he draws the ontology of being as communion is firmly anchored in the Bible and the church tradition, at least by intention and orientation.

[114] Chapman, 'Social,' 239.
[115] *OTM* 7 and 179.
[116] Cf. Chapman, 'Social,' 252, in which Chapman shows his position by saying that 'it does not seem too far-fetched to suggest that the importance of the Trinity is not that it is fixed in its formulation but rather that it points towards the constant need for practical transformation, of resolving the conflict for the moment, which is the always uncompleted work of the spirit. Doctrinal solutions, like the compromises of politics, are temporary and very partial settlements that are always open to change and development.'

Chapter 3 Substance and Reductionism

In addition to the charges of social trinitarianism and projectionism, Gunton is also criticised for the reduction of substance. This critique is advanced by Richard Fermer in particular, Bernard Nausner closely following him.[1] The critique of Fermer, who has already been introduced in previous discussions, is quite comprehensive, not only touching on the issues of social trinitarianism and projection but also including reconsiderations of the works of the Cappadocians, thus enabling Nausner to claim without further ado that Gunton's transcendental project, though laudable, has failed to do what it intended to do.[2] Given the apparent weight of this argument, it is necessary to examine Gunton's work and the validity of the challenge. Because most of their arguments are concerned with the concept of substance or ousia, we shall begin with a survey of the concept of substance as it is used in Gunton's work.

3.1. Substance in Gunton

Gunton's use of the word "substance" is more complex than is assumed and treated by his critics. The complexity arises partly because he continues to use it while his theology develops through interactions with various works of others, and partly because the process involves different stages in which the concept of substance itself undergoes changes or modifications in its sense or reference. The following six stages or features outline the development of the concept of substance in Gunton's work: (1) simple use of substance for Greek *ousia*; (2) decision to continue to use the word substance; (3) identification of a problematic notion of substance; (4.a) use of substance in apposition to the being of which it is a primary predicate, in the sense of what a being substantially is; (4.b) relative freedom of substance from being used for *ousia*; and (4.c) suggestion of a transcendental use of substance in reference to the particular.

1. Gunton's use of the word substance starts with his first book *Becoming and Being*. The use of the word at this point is simple and negative: *simple* because it is used only as part of explicating the theologies of Charles Hartshorne and Karl Barth;[3] *negative* because each is presented as having negative views of the language of substance. For

[1] Bernard Nausner, 'The failure of a laudable project: Gunton, the Trinity and human self-understanding,' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 62/4, 2009, 403–20.
[2] Nausner, 'Failure,' 420.
[3] See *BB* 18f, 59, 142f, 199, and also 237 (as part of the epilogue added in the 2nd edition, belonging to a later stage of the development of his thought).

them, that is, substance is too "static" a concept to be used for predicating the "dynamic" being of God (Barth) and the "dynamic" reality of the universe (Hartshorne).[4] Finding himself in a situation in which the concept of substance has been progressively weakened, Gunton takes note of two suggestions regarding what to do with the concept of substance. One is to reject the use of the language of substance along with the whole conception of philosophy or metaphysics that seeks entities that one cannot see, hear, taste, touch or smell.[5] The other is to replace substance with a word of more dynamic nuance such as "event" or "becoming," to accommodate the contemporary views of the world.[6] Yet Gunton adopts these options, neither here nor later,[7] though his awareness of both the problem and the alternatives offered by Ayer and Hartshorne indicates that there is a decision to be made on his part about what to do with the language of substance, as the one made in the next stage of his thinking.

2. Gunton pays attention more directly than previously to the concept of substance as he turns to a discussion of the status of Christological statements in his *Yesterday and Today*. With his focus on the relation of our language to reality, Gunton asks whether the word *ousia* or substance is now obsolete as a model for modern Christology.[8] In developing an answer, he offers the following five considerations, which is to become the ground of his decision to continue to use the word. The first concerns the function of the classical notion of substance as indicating something real and the significance of this notion in arguments against reductionism. For the former Gunton cites Donald MacKinnon, saying that 'the category of substance was used by Aristotle as a means of indicating something that is really there.'[9] For the latter he draws on Christopher Stead's point that, 'To characterize God as a substance is to stake a claim against reductionist theories which in effect represent God as dependent on the human experience which he is invoked to explain.'[10] The second concerns the fact that whilst substance has various senses its theological use does not necessarily imply a "static

[4] For Hartshorne, see *BB* 19 and 59 for Hartshorne and, for Barth, 142f and 199. This is something to be noted against those who criticise Gunton's use of the word "person" on the basis that Barth wanted to avoid its use for the three of the Trinity.
[5] *BB* 19, and Alfred J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*, London: Gollancz, 1946, 40–3.
[6] See the references given in *BB* 19, of Hartshorne's works.
[7] Gunton's response to the suggestions appear in his *YT*, 155–8, as we will see later.
[8] By "models" here Gunton means 'the words and concepts by which the tradition, and we, in so far as we can indwell the tradition in order to speak in our own words, attempt to articulate the reality of Jesus Christ' (*YT* 159).
[9] *YT* 156, and D. M. MacKinnon, '"Substance" in Christology—a Cross-bench View,' in S. W. Sykes and J. P. Clayton (eds), *Christ, Faith and History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972, 279–300 (294, 297).
[10] *YT* 157, as cited from G. C. Stead, *Divine Substance*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, 273.

ontology."[11] Stead is cited again saying, 'God can be, and has been, represented as a changing substance, and indeed as one that is ever-changing and infinitely adaptable.'[12] In other words, 'the description of God in terms of substance does not of itself prejudge the question whether God is, or is not, involved in change.'[13] Consequently, to regard "substance" and "being" as static, and "event" and "becoming" as dynamic, offers little more than mere products of association.[14] In addition, Gunton notes that there are prior questions to be addressed, such as what we mean by "God" and "human" and whether God's eternity precludes dynamic interrelationship with the temporal.[15] Thirdly, however, even "dynamism" (or "change") is not the sole measure of theological language. The doctrine of the *homoousios*, for example, has at its heart an element of "stability" or "continuity," namely 'something about what *he always is*, so that we may understand that he is a present and future as well as a past reality.'[16] The fourth consideration is the success of early Christian theologians in adapting language to what they wished to portray, in other words, using contemporary language in such a way as to bring different aspects of the reality of Jesus Christ into expression without forcing the reality of their experience into language.[17] Gunton notes that *ousia* or substance is an abstract term or second-order language, operating at a higher level of abstraction than statements of doctrine like the incarnation, yet not merely as language about language,[18] but rather as a theological control on the more basic models, still concerned with what is out there.[19] For Gunton, finally, more important than whether "substance" has a dynamic or static meaning is the framework in which it is conceived and employed. For example, *homoousios* is open to dualistic as well as non-dualistic interpretations, with different results. If taken within a dualistic framework, regardless of its predefined sense, dynamic or static, substance can develop a problematic notion, as happened with Schleiermacher.[20] On the other hand, if used in a non-dualistic framework, substance can still successfully express what the early Christians designed it to do,[21] namely to

[11] *YT* 157. Cf. Stead, *Substance*, 158, 274.
[12] A repeated point in *Substance*, 106, 171 and 274.
[13] Stead, *Substance*, 275.
[14] *YT* 156. Cf. *BB* 199f.
[15] *YT* 158.
[16] *YT* 157–78. We might add, from *BB* 236, that 'there are different forms of dynamism and not all are acceptable theologically.'
[17] *YT* 157.
[18] As is suggested by Richard A. Norris Jr., 'Towards a Contemporary Interpretation of the Chalcedonian Definition' in R. A. Norris (ed.), *Lux in Lumine: Essays to Honour W. Norman Pittenger*, New York: Seabury Press, 1966, 62–79 (78).
[19] *YT* 159.
[20] *YT* 158.
[21] Ibid.

express two aspects of Jesus' reality—'of one substance with the Father' and 'of one substance with our humanity.'[22]

That said, we might consider the following three as additional markers of Gunton's use of substance at this stage. Firstly, while Gunton's attention is turned to the concept of substance it is not yet fully drawn to its *sense* or *meaning*. Rather, his focus is on the *function* of the word as a theological term or model. Secondly, the five considerations for which Gunton chose to use substance remain as grounds for his continued use of the term beyond this stage. With none of them revoked in any later work, they are to be reckoned with by anyone who wishes to argue that Gunton rejects the concept of substance or reduces it to something other than its traditional meaning. This is a stage, thirdly, in which Gunton's use of substance is rather conventional, corresponding to the Greek *ousia* conceived in distinction from *hypostasis*,[23] as demonstrated in the examples cited above.[24]

3. Gunton's next use of substance is found in his book *Enlightenment and Alienation*, which is still simple and conventional, similar to the uses found in the first and the second stages and mainly in discussing the works of others. Its distinctness lies in the fact that his attention is now turned to the *sense* of substance, though it is a problematic one found in the theories of perception developed by the pioneers of the Enlightenment.[25] In agreement with Berkeley and Coleridge about the importance of correct understanding of perception as the key to a proper understanding of the relation between God and the world,[26] Gunton argues that the theories of perception developed by the early modern thinkers are responsible, to a large extent, for producing a notion of substance that has created an unfortunate condition in which the person is alienated from the world.[27] Berkeley is used to demonstrate the problem, namely the view that perception takes place passively as ideas are thrust by some outside agency into the mind through the senses (with the difference only that for Descartes the mind is at birth furnished with a number of ideas and for Locke the mind obtains the whole of its

[22] *YT* 12, 16, 40f, 100 and 155.
[23] As the distinction is seen, for example, in *YT* 158.
[24] Cf. also, *YT* 155: 'What, then, of this word οὐσια or *substance* as it has since come to be translated?'
[25] Gunton does not deny that the Enlightenment taught us many good things, for example, its success as a spur to human liberation, advance and discovery. Cf. *EA* 1, 2, 4, 6 and 44. He is doubtful, however, that the Enlightenment has brought in a condition in which we humans are *truly* free, for example.
[26] *EA* 11, 26 and 30.
[27] *EA* 16–21.

contents from without).[28] While Gunton takes the concept of an outside agency thrusting ideas into the mind and causing the mind to perceive from without as Descartes' understanding of substance,[29] he considers Locke to have taken such a notion of substance further into obscurity by theorizing that it is "qualities" possessed by objects that directly transmit ideas into the mind.[30] Substance is still part of the cause of perception, but now lies behind the qualities that cause perception, being not the direct source of the data that flow into the mind but some senseless and imperceptible matter lying under or behind the qualities that cause the mind to perceive what is actually perceived.[31] The problem here for Gunton as it was for Berkeley is how one can think of ideas, which are rational, purely as a result of the mechanical impact of such senseless matter on the mind through qualities. Gunton follows Berkeley in challenging whether it is not a categorical mistake to take mere material things or qualities possessed by them as the cause of perception, if ideas belong in the mind and perception is a rational activity.[32] Berkeley was determined, according to Gunton, 'to replace the concept of substance with that of an active, ever-involved God, as the sole cause and explanation of why things are as they are.'[33] Yet the replacement of the concept of substance with that of God is not the way Gunton takes.[34] It is sufficient for him to have identified a problematic notion of substance responsible for the alienation of the person from the world, namely substance as some senseless and unknowable matter underlying what meets the senses.[35] The significance of this identification for our enquiry is that while Gunton has no reason to discard the word substance he now has his own ground to find or develop a notion of it that is less problematic or more adequate than that which has been identified at this stage.

4. Having looked at three distinct stages of Gunton's use of substance, we are now approaching a fourth stage in which we might grasp Gunton's own conception of substance, especially as it appears in *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology* and *The One, the Three and the Many*. Yet this is a stage in which the concept of substance is taken in

[28] Texts used by Gunton are: George Berkeley, *Three dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous, in opposition to Sceptics and Atheists*, London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1910; John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding; *The Philosophical Works of Descartes* Volume 1, tr. Elizabeth Haldane and G. R. T. Ross, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1931.
[29] *EA* 16f.
[30] *EA* 18f.
[31] *EA* 20 and 26.
[32] Berkeley, *Three*, 246. Cf. *EA* 27.
[33] *EA* 30, in the belief that rational ideas that belong in minds must be the gift of a constantly creating and preserving deity.
[34] For a reason, see *OTM* 198f.
[35] Cf. *EA* 28f. For Gunton's critical treatment of Berkeley in other aspects, see *EA* 45f, 49f; *OTM* 198f.

various directions, making it too complicated to deal with it as a single stage or multiple stages. In what follows I shall first trace the movement in terms of three aspects of one stage developing in close relation to each other.

a. The first is that in which Gunton uses substance in apposition to the being of which it is a primary predicate, as seen in saying, 'The substance of God, "God," has no ontological content, no true being, apart from communion.'[36] These are surely Zizioulas' words explicating Cappadocian theology, though Gunton's use of them is noticeably approving, with no question raised against any part of it here or elsewhere. Rather, as we saw in chapter one, the idea of the substance of God—God—as communion is to become the core of his theological programme. Thus, in Gunton's words, 'God *is* no more than what Father, Son and Spirit give to and receive from each other in the inseparable communion that is the outcome of their love.[37] Just as Gunton found a problematic notion of substance in the philosophy of modern rationalists now he has found a better way of using the word in the Cappadocian theology laid out by Zizioulas.

It needs to be noted that we should not understand Gunton's use of Zizioulas' words in terms of a shifting or jumping to a latest idea but his theology converging on Cappadocian theology through the mediation of Zizioulas' work. It is equally important to note that whilst the works of the Cappadocians and Zizioulas certainly provide Gunton with resources to advance his work they neither provide the resources nor constitute the work. As we have already seen, Gunton's move towards an appropriate concept of substance has been determined independently from a detailed contact with the Cappadocian theology through Zizioulas.[38] In that sense, his turn to the idea of the substance of God as communion is to be seen as a natural move from the previous stage in which he has the concept of substance deprived of the problematic notion of it as referring to something other than what meet the senses. An operation of such a concept of substance in theology would result in a notion of the substance of God that is sought in something other than God. Yet that is not what he understands by the substance of God, which is rather concerned with the ontology of God, what God really is, or the being that God is as he is revealed. It is that sense in which Gunton finds part of what he seeks in the Cappadocian idea advocated by Zizioulas, that "substance" has no

[36] Zizioulas, *Being*, 17, cited by Gunton in *PTT* 9.
[37] *PTT* 10. Gunton's emphasis.
[38] And, as we will see, Gunton does not follow the Cappadocian or Zizioulas' theology from end to end.

ontological content (apart from the communion of the three persons).[39] It means that there is no predefined concept of substance that Gunton brings into speaking of the substance of God, which needs to be known rather than presumed. That is the significance of his placing of substance in apposition to the being of which it is a primary predicate (viz. the substance of God is …), only to predicate of it by the words deriving from reflecting on the ways in which God is revealed.

b. The second aspect is that in which the concept of substance gains a certain distance from *ousia* as Gunton chooses "being" as his preferred term for what is normally referred to by it along with other terms, including substance. Such a move is seen in various places. For example, in his speaking of communion: 'Communion is the *meaning* of the word [God]; there is no "being" of God other than this dynamic of persons in relation.'[40] Here, we find, not only is the word "being" used but also put in emphasis. A more definite example is his suggestion of 'one in being' rather than 'of one substance' as possibly the best translation of *homoousion* today.[41] His reason for deselecting the latter rendering is to avoid the interpretation that God is in some sense "substance" with the implication that 'there is impersonal being under- or over-lying the three persons in relation.'[42] The effect of the choice is that substance obtains relative freedom from the realm where it is normally located with other terms for *ousia*: *relative* because Gunton still uses substance for *ousia*; and *freedom* from its link to *ousia* to support it to mean what a being substantially is. A good place to see this is his last monograph, *Act and Being*, where being is his *de facto* word for *ousia* while substance rarely appears except in citations of others.[43] For instance, 'The three persons *are* the being of God, and if we know the Father through the Son and in the Spirit we know the being of God.'[44]

Having said that, we have a complicating element in the passage immediately preceding the one cited above. 'If we *know* the hypostases—by the mediation of scripture and the church's life and proclamation—then we know the *substance*, being, essence, *Wesen*,

[39] The latter part is put in bracket to maintain our focus on substance and be not distracted by its link to the word "communion." For the same idea as presented in the text that is expressed without using communion, see Zizioulas, *Being*, 41: 'the substance never exists in a "naked" state, that is, without hypostasis, without a mode of existence,' with references to Basil, *Letter* 38, 2; G. L. Prestige, *Patristic*, 254 and 279; Maximus the Confessor, *Ambigua* 42; and Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius* 1.
[40] *PTT* 10. Original emphasis.
[41] *PTT* 198. Cf. *YT* 12, 14 et al, where we have 'of one substance with the Father.'
[42] Ibid.
[43] See *AB* 6 (Rene Descartes), 98 (Karl Barth) and 111 (Robert C. Doyle). See also *CF* 89f.
[44] *AB* 112. Gunton's emphasis.

etc. of God, for there is nothing else to be known.'[45] Substance here is used with other terms for the same referent, yet in italics and I wonder why. To say that it is meant as a simple emphasis does not help to answer the question since it might be further asked why emphasis is given only to that word. One possibility is to look at the emphasis as reflecting Gunton's awareness of the complexity involved in his use of substance for *ousia*: not only for the Greek *ousia*, but also in the sense of what a being really is, even with a relative freedom from being a word for *ousia*. Another is then to view the use of the italics as an indication of the unique place of substance among all the words used alongside it. What we have been discussing thus far is how substance in Gunton goes through variant phases of use along with the development of his thought, in contrast to the other terms which remain more or less the same throughout. Such a status indicates a further possibility, which is that substance in this passage is in semantic control over the others in determining their common meaning, rather than standing with the others for the meaning defined by them in their normal senses.

c. The third aspect of Gunton's use of substance at the stage under discussion concerns his consideration of taking substance 'to refer simply to the particular entities—things, people, creatures—of our everyday experience.'[46] The complicating element here is that the use of substance for referring to these entities is at variance with the traditional use of substance for *ousia*, and even with Gunton's own use of substance discussed thus far. It is only with the recognition that Gunton's project in which the suggestion is made is one of the most experimental phases of the development of his work, so far as the concept of substance is concerned, that we can move on in search of ways to understand what the suggestion is about.[47]

To begin with, the problem against which Gunton makes the above suggestion is not substance or substantial thinking but what they have been made of and the framework in which they have been operated.[48] What Gunton has in mind is a particular notion of substance which he identified in the early modern thinkers in terms of something that

[45] Ibid. Gunton's emphasis. While the use of "etc." after the four words indicates that more can be added to the list, the absence of *ousia* among them is interesting, not only because it makes a contrast to its presence in his previous works but also because it raises a question as to whether Gunton has simply missed it out for no reason or he did not use it simply because the four words are all translations of it or he has finally abandoned its use for a reason, for example, to avoid misunderstanding or because he is not speaking of it. In any case, I think, it is important to give priority to what Gunton says over its relation to the meaning of *ousia* in the Cappadocian use.
[46] *OTM* 195.
[47] Webster calls Gunton's *The One, the Many and the Three* 'most ambitious book' ('Systematic,' 261).
[48] *OTM* 193f.

underlies what meets the senses. That idea now is 'the dragon that has to be slain,' being a point in which his criticism of that notion of substance is extended backwards so far as to include Parmenides' quest for a timeless and changeless underlying reality and forwards to include the Kantian category of substance.[49] Gunton argues, 'there is no need to take literally the "below" of the latinate word we use.'[50] What he also has in mind is the tendency to get to the real by passing over the appearances,[51] a tendency directing the philosophical refusal 'to accept that a thing is primarily what it concretely is in its temporal and spatial relationality'[52] and effecting the theological refusal 'to remain with the concrete hypostases in their relatedness, but to seek instead some underlying principle of deity.'[53] It is only against such a tendency and a concept of substance that Gunton suggests the use of substance to refer to the particulars.

By this suggestion, however, Gunton does not mean to say that surface is all that there is but to establish what he calls the substantiality of things, i.e., to say that a thing or a person or a work of art is already real, sufficiently substantial, by existing as a particular entity in time and space in relation to the others.[54] Gunton argues, in contrast to the prevailing tendency, 'to be real, a being need not be supported by timeless monads or underlying substratum.'[55] Even 'a musical tone has its own proper being, given it for its brief time of existence by its relation to player, instrument, air movement and the rest; it has its own substantial being in space and time.'[56] In other words, 'even those most apparently evanescent of realities, musical tones, have their own way of existing concretely.'[57] Gunton does not deny that perceptions can be erroneous; appearances can be misleading and everything can be more than what it appears to be.[58] He only opposes the combined tendency to think that appearances are less than real (or, the most real is other than appearances) and to seek the primary reality in something that underlies them.[59]

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[49] *OTM* 200.
[50] *OTM* 195. Cf. also, *PTT* ch.3.
[51] *OTM* 200 n.29.
[52] *OTM* 200.
[53] Ibid.
[54] By 'something is real' Gunton simply means 'what it is and not another thing' (ibid).
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.
[57] *OTM* 201 n.32.
[58] See *OTM* 200f.
[59] Cf. *OTM* 200 n.29. Gunton draws on Donald MacKinnon's study of substance in Christology and Victor Zuckerkandl's study of the phenomenon of musicality, against the Gnostic belief, shared by modernism and late modernism, that 'because material particulars appear to be evanescent, they lack the kind of substantial reality that art has usually ascribed to them' (ibid).

As might have been noticed in the music tone passage above, what Gunton means by substance in his suggestion of it as referring to the particulars is a thing as a *whole*, not a *part* of something. This is an important point that can easily be passed over. Let us listen to Gunton further: 'The crucial and concrete realities of our world are the particular things—substances—which are what they are by virtue of being wholes that are constituted indeed of parts but in such a way that they are more than simply the sum of the parts.'[60] The connection of "substances" with "wholes" would not be an issue in the usual association of *ousia* with the general and of *hypostasis* with the particular. Yet we are dealing with a passage in which "substances" is plainly linked to "particular things," before they are together connected to "wholes." To follow them by the order in which they appear, we would have this: particulars = substances = wholes. The particular here (and so substance) is not "the particular" in the Cappadocian conceptuality that is related to "the common" to explain the distinction between *hypostasis* and *ousia*."[61] They are rather particular objects of our experience (e.g., "people," "cabbages," "tables," "tones," and "works of art"), whose substantiality, though obvious, tends to be lost in the drive towards the underlying reality or disappear into insubstantiality in the opposite drive towards the surface.[62]

5. By using the concept of substance in the ways shown above, Gunton puts the reader in a complicated position in which it is difficult to find a coherent account of his conception of substance. We could simply leave the situation as it is, but in preparation of the discussion of the criticisms of Gunton's work related to his concept of substance, I shall go further to present the following clarifications.

a. Firstly, regarding the concept of substance Gunton links to the particular, it does not much help to understand them via the *ousia-hypostasis* scheme. One obvious reason is that substance in Gunton is linked to *hypostasis* as well as to *ousia*, and both in particular ways, as we have seen. More importantly, the focus of his project is to develop a notion of substance that suits his purpose to establish the transcendentality of the particular, though with the help of the Cappadocian concepts, not in order to expound their terminology. Besides, Gunton uses substance linked to the particular only of the created beings, nowhere applying it to speaking of Father, Son and Spirit. As for the latter, there are other terms that he consistently uses, i.e., hypostasis or person. As a

[60] *OTM* 201.
[61] Cf. St Basil, *Ep*. 38.4; *Ep*. 236.6.
[62] Cf. *OTM* 194–202.

theological term, however, he employs substance only for what he also calls the being (or *ousia*) of God, even after his proposal of the use of substance as referring to particular entities.[63]

b. If we are to understand Gunton's conceptuality in relation to the Cappadocian then there is perhaps a better way than doing so by the *ousia-hypostasis* scheme, namely, that of *ousia-hypostasis-prosopon*. There are two things that, when combined, might help to shed light on this perspective. The first concerns what we previously considered in terms of Gunton's detachment of "substance" from being in the word group with "being" by choosing the latter as a better word for *ousia*.[64] In such a move we see something similar to what Gunton thinks the Cappadocians did with the words *ousia* and *hypostasis* in their own context, that is, 'making what were synonymous terms into words of distinct meaning.'[65] In a large part of Gunton's work, that is to say, substance and being are synonymous but his focused work on the concept of substance in his transcendental project results in their differentiation into different nuances so that "being" is now understood by the concept of "substance" that is moved closer to the Cappadocian *hypostasis* or the particular. The second concerns Gunton's suggestion of using substance for referring to particular things and people. The expected effect of this linking of substance to the particular is a lifting of the particular things of our experience from being regarded as insubstantial or unreliable to the status of being seen as substantial realities, i.e., the most real things that there are.[66] This is an effect similar to that which Gunton understands in terms of the Cappadocian synonymisation of *hypostasis* and *prosopon*, the process whereby 'the former word lost its connotations of something underlying; the latter its suggestion of mere surface reality.'[67] Similarly, by the process of connecting substance to the particular, the former is helped to remain concrete on the surface while the latter gets substantial support to be real. The difference remains that the Cappadocian synonymisation is of theological terms whereas Gunton's is of transcendental terms.

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[63] Cf. *AB* 112.
[64] §3.1.4.b, in reference to *PTT* 198.
[65] *OTM* 191. Gunton's mention of the Cappadocian desynonymizing is immediately followed by what has become a controversial part of his work, which will be taken up for discussion in the next section. Cf. also, Gunton, 'Trinity,' 939f, in reference to Coleridge.
[66] *OTM* 200 n.29.
[67] *OTM* 197 n.22.

The best way to understand Gunton's use of substance functioning in two ways is perhaps against the background of his understanding of what the Cappadocians did with the concept of *hypostasis*, namely, in relation to "being" (*ousia*) as the locus of its substantiality and to "the particular" (*prosopon*) as the support to make its reality substantially enough. This encourages us to have, if required, a correlation of Gunton's "being," "substance" and "particular" with the Cappadocian *ousia*, *hypostasis* and *prosopon*, though not as definite translations or exact equivalents, but in their common functionalities for enabling conceptual explorations. An implication is that to look at his conceptual works from a perspective that operates only with the Cappadocian distinction between *ousia* and *hypostasis* can be rather misleading and even distorting.

c. In the case of Gunton's use of substance in apposition to the being of which it is a primary predicate in the sense of what that being really is, substance is placed closer to *ousia* than *hypostasis*. Yet, the movement to consider here is not just between *ousia* and *hypostasis*, or from the particular to the general, but from *ousia* through *hypostasis* back to *ousia* due to the fact that Gunton uses substance (*ousia*) for the shape of a being known through the particular (*hypostasis*) without denying the generic sense of *ousia*. This encourages that we posit two concepts of *ousia* (and being) at work in Gunton, corresponding to the two ways in which the concept of substance functions in his work. One is the concept of *ousia* that is not much different from that advocated by his critics as Cappadocian and providing the grammar of unity. Gunton does not explicitly uses this concept of *ousia* but it is nonetheless supposed in his thinking of the three persons as divine yet not as three Gods. The other is the concept of *ousia* that is positively promoted by Gunton in a specific sense supported by the concept of substance that he develops from the Cappadocian concept of *hypostasis*.[68] To speak of the divine *ousia* in the first sense we need only to know the divine nature and its attributes. Yet, in the second sense, we can speak of the divine *ousia* only by knowing its particular representations in concrete situations. In other words, whilst the *ousia* of God in the first sense is knowable regardless of a knowledge of the particulars and their relations, that knowledge is indispensable to knowing the *ousia* of God in the second sense.

The best way to hold the concept of *ousia* in these two senses is by understanding the first *ousia* in the sense of "given-ness" (or, metaphysical form given to God), and the second *ousia* in the sense of "constituted-ness" (or, ontological shape revealed by Father,

[68] As is done in *OTM* 188–95.

Son and Spirit). These notions of *ousia* are both present in Gunton's work, as we saw, though his focus in his transcendental project is concentrated on the second ("the general being of God," "the real *substance* of God," "what he really is"). That is what he appears to have tried to develop with the help of Cappadocian theology and his critics like Fermer and Nausner appear to have failed to appreciate by holding onto the first.

3.2. Reductionism and other criticisms

With a detailed account of the concept of substance, being or *ousia* in Gunton, we are now in a position to deal with the criticisms of his conceptual work by Fermer and Nausner as introduced in the first pages of this chapter. Among the arguments to respond are the following six:[69] (1) Gunton, along with Zizioulas, works with a concept of *ousia* that is different from the concept of *ousia* operating in the works of the Cappadocians; (2) the priority of the particular over the universal promoted by Gunton is an unwarranted assumption that creeps into his argument; (3) Gunton selects and privileges certain terms and concepts over others without stating their criteria; (4) he reduces the traditional concept of substance to the concept of communion or hypostases; (5) he dissolves the concept of particularity to relations; (6) and he abolishes the balance between *ousia* and *hypostasis* that the Cappadocians worked hard to achieve. The problems pointed out by these criticisms appear to be serious enough to draw attention, yet few responses have been made.[70] In such a situation, this part of discussion aims to produce what Nausner has called for, viz. 'a defensible version of Gunton's project.'[71] What follows are responses to the arguments listed above,[72] mainly discussed over the following passage from Gunton for the reason that most of them are directed at what he says in the passage:[73]

> It could here be argued that when the Western tradition took the decision to translate the Greek *ousia* by *substantia*, which is in point of fact a literal

[69] As found in Fermer, 'Limits,' 165–7 and 175–84; Nausner, 'Failure,' 413–20.
[70] I have found no response to Fermer's work, despite its use by other critics of Gunton. As for Nausner's work, we have only Mark Thompson, 'Has Colin Gunton's Theological Project Really Failed?,' http://markdthompson.blogspot.co.uk/2009/12/has-colin-guntons-theological-project.html, accessed 14/04/10, perhaps as the only response available. Giving an outline of Nausner's critique of Gunton, with some critical comments in defence of Gunton, Thompson anticipates a more extensive response to Nausner's article. Yet, the expected work, Höhne, *Spirit and Sonship*, is not as expected, with an actual response to Nausner's (or Fermer's) critique of Gunton missing.
[71] Nausner, 'Failure,' 420.
[72] The order in which the arguments are discussed might be slightly different from that in which they were introduced.
[73] The excerpt is long, and part of it is already used. Yet the length is the same as it is cited by Fermer in critique of Gunton's promotion of the *being-as-communion* thesis. See his 'Limits,' 166.

> translation of *hypostasis*, it effectively deprived the concept of the person of due weight because it introduced a stress on the *underlying* reality of God. On such a translation, the thought is encouraged that the real *substance* of God, what he substantially is, is the being that underlies the particular persons. What was lost was the force of the Cappadocian desynonymizing of ousia and hypostasis: of making what were synonymous terms into words of distinct meaning. By using hypostasis to refer to the concrete particulars—the persons—and then proceeding to say that the *ousia*—general being—of God is constituted without remainder by what the persons are to and from each other in eternal perichoresis, these theologians made it possible to conceive a priority of the particular over the universal. God is what he is as a communion of persons, the particularity of whom remains at the centre of all he is …[74]

1. *Reduction*. This argument was made initially by Fermer and repeated by Nausner: 'what Gunton is effectively doing here is *reducing* the classical concept of substance to the concept of communion instead of keeping both concepts in a balanced dialectic, a balance that the Greek Fathers tried to maintain.'[75] Putting aside the issue of balance for now, we focus here on the argument that Gunton reduces the concept of substance to that of communion.[76] A proper treatment of this argument would require a comparison of Gunton's work (and the critics') with the work of the Greek fathers,[77] yet here there are three things that can be said without recourse to them. Firstly, it is important to take more care in using the word "substance" than Nausner does in his engagement with Gunton. What the critic has in mind by "the classical concept of substance" appears to be the Cappadocian concept of *ousia*, as indicated by the reference to Gregory of Nyssa's work.[78] In that case, there are at least two things that Nausner should have taken into consideration, both noted in the previous discussion.[79] One is that Gunton's use of "substance" is connected to *hypostasis* as well as *ousia*,[80] whatever this may mean.[81] The other is his choice of the word "being" over "substance" as a better translation of *ousia*, leaving the latter word "substance" to stand relatively free from its use in link with other terms, such as *ousia*, being and essence.[82] It follows, therefore, that any criticism regarding Gunton's use of substance needs to accompany a qualification concerning the meaning of substance; otherwise, of better service to the same purpose would be the word *ousia* (like Fermer's) or being (as preferred by

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[74] *OTM* 191. Original emphasis. Cf. also, *PTT* 9 and 94.
[75] Nausner, 'Failure,' 414. Emphasis added. Cf. also, Fermer, 'Limits,' 165.
[76] Nausner, 'Failure,' also advances this "reduction" argument in terms of 'the abandonment of the theological concepts of substance and the subject' (417f) and 'the sublation of substance-talk in relationality-talk' (413).
[77] §4.5.
[78] Nausner, 'Failure,' 413f n.43.
[79] §3.1.
[80] §3.1.4.
[81] §3.1.5.
[82] §3.1.4.b.

Gunton). Nausner's use of substance in his criticism of Gunton thus indicates that he is not aware of the complexity involved in Gunton's use of substance. Fermer is better informed regarding the term as he consistently uses Greek terms, though it is difficult to find a place showing that he has distinguished the subtle difference noted previously between the concept of substance and that of *ousia* in Gunton's work.

Secondly, Nausner's critique of Gunton reveals more about his own approach than it reveals a problem in Gunton's work. Nausner thinks that substance is always a word for *ousia*, yet it is an assumption that may hold well in other cases but not in dealing with Gunton's transcendental work. Gunton indeed uses substance as an equivalent to *ousia*, but only to a certain point until his work reaches a stage where he is more conscious of that use than before. It is a stage, to repeat, in and after which Gunton tends to leave some markers to minimise misunderstanding regarding what he means when he uses substance for *ousia*.[83] The passage under consideration here clearly belongs to that stage, with a concern about the unfortunate effects brought about by the incorrect translation of *ousia* by *substantia*.[84] In the passage, further, substance is used only once, and even this instance does not occur in the part of the passage cited by Nausner. Besides, the one-off use of the word is used in italics ("*substance*"), preceded by a qualification ("real"), with a gloss following ("what he substantially is"). These are all necessary elaborations for Gunton to make sure what he means by substance before predicating of it as a communion of the persons. Yet they are made redundant by Nausner and his use of the word substance in such a determined way as to ignore the actual words used by Gunton. The same is true of Fermer's work, yet it has two advantages over his fellow critic's comments. One is that it engages with the Cappadocian text used by Gunton and thereby provides a common authority against which one can run a cross examination of the two arguments, as one will be done in the next chapter.[85] The other is that Fermer's constant use of Greek terms followed by English equivalents in brackets helps to have the issue in clearer terms, for example, 'why they appear to reduce the concept of *ousia*

[83] See *OTM* 193, where Gunton's use of the term "substantiality" rather than "substance" is said to have been made to minimise misunderstanding.
[84] For the matter of translation, see *OTM* 191; William P. Aston, 'Substance and the Trinity,' in Davis et al, *Trinity*, 184–7.
[85] §4.2.

(essence/substance), found in the Cappadocians, to the concept of *koinonia* (communion).'[86]

Thirdly, while the concept of *ousia* in its generic sense as advocated by Fermer may be absent in Gunton's work, this is not due to Gunton reducing the term to *koinonia* to say that *koinonia* = *ousia*, but rather because the generic sense is not required for saying that *ousia* = *koinonia*. As aforementioned, Gunton's speaking of the *ousia* of God as a *koinonia* of the three hypostases supposes that they are all divine, that the divine nature is what they hold in common, and even that they are one God and not three. In our passage, however, he is focused on what he calls the "substantiality" of God, which is still substance for him, yet not in the sense of something located under or over the divine particulars but rather of what the one substance really is. Also, it is the common or the universal standing vis-à-vis the particular, as in the works of the Cappadocians, only not as something determined by the general nature of divinity (the *ousia* for Fermer) but as the one being constituted by the three hypostases in their relations to each other. In sum, while Fermer may be correct in identifying the Cappadocian *ousia* and its difference from Gunton's *ousia*, the identification by itself would not be sufficient to justify his argument that Gunton therefore reduces the concept of *ousia* to that of *koinonia*.

2. *Disparity*. The question here is whether Gunton's *ousia* is different from that found in the works of the Cappadocians. Fermer argues, immediately after his citation of the above passage, 'This does not fit with Basil of Caesarea's and Gregory of Nyssa's use of *ousia* as a general term for the essence of God.'[87] While this is also an argument that calls for an examination of the works of the Cappadocians, it can be said here that "*ousia* as a general term for the essence of God" is not what Gunton disproves in the passage. Gunton also uses the concept of *ousia* as a "general" term for the "essence" of God, as in speaking of "the *ousia*–general being–of God." This leads us to say that the difference between Gunton and his critic is not whether *ousia* is a general term for the essence of God but rather what they mean by "general" and "essence." For Fermer, *ousia* as a general term for the essence of God refers to 'the common nature, of which

[86] Fermer, 'Limits,' 165. This question becomes definite after a few lines later (how the phrases found in the Cappadocian works justify 'the reduction of *ousia* to *koinonia*.' The same happens in Nausner who turns the probing question into something definitive ("as the result of the reduction …" or "Gunton is effectively reducing …"). See 'Failure,' 414.
[87] Fermer, 'Limits,' 166.

one predicates general features, such as uncreatedness, omnipresence, incomprehensibility, infinity etc., common to all three *hypostaseis*.'[88] What is general here has a "generic" sense, concerning and predicable to all deities of any kind. In this passage, on the other hand, Gunton approaches the general aspect of God, rather hypostatically, in the sense that its ontological contents are understood by the hypostases and their relations to each other. What is sought here is not the divine nature or its features that can be applied to any deity but, rather, be drawn only from the particular being in question. Fermer may be correct in noticing the absence in this passage of the idea of *ousia* in its generic sense, but his introduction of it as showing Gunton's 'apprehension at the idea of a genera or species of "divinity" over and above the *hypostaseis*'[89] is misleading and revealing: *misleading* because, insofar as it concerns what is said in this passage, what "causes apprehension" in Gunton, if any, are rather an effective deprivation of the concept of person of ontological due weight by stressing on the underlying reality of God and the submersion of what he calls "substantiality" under the "being that underlies the three particular persons," and *revealing* in that it shows that Fermer approaches Gunton with a predetermined concept of *ousia*.

3. *Privileging*. Fermer argues that Gunton selects or privileges certain concepts (principally *koinonia*) over others (mainly *ousia*) without stating the criteria of his choice.[90] This argument is not made in direct reference to the passage under consideration but, nevertheless, is treated here not only because it is repeated in Nausner but also for its significance as the opening argument against Gunton's appeal to the Cappadocians, facilitating the introduction of other arguments that are being treated here. That is, once it is established that Gunton's conceptuality does not agree with that of its alleged source the critic will have a considerable obstacle removed for the subsequent arguments. Another reason concerns the absence of Gunton's work Fermer uses for making the argument apart from the idea of God as a communion of the three persons contained as in our passage.[91] Fermer refers to some of the Cappadocians' works to show that they used a variety of concepts without privileging one over the other, but brings in nothing from Gunton's side (or Zizioulas') to show where such

[88] Ibid. The references are made to Gregory of Nyssa, *Letter* 38.2; *Contra Eunomius* I.227, and Basil, *Eps.* 210, 214, 236.
[89] Fermer, 'Limits,' 166. In these words, he introduces Gunton's passage under discussion.
[90] Fermer, 'Limits,' 164f. Cf. also, Nausner, 'Failure,' 413–6.
[91] See the discussion in Fermer, 'Limits,' 164f.

selectivity takes place in their works or in what way it occurs. The reader is simply expected to follow Fermer when he states that Gunton privileges some concepts over others without stating the criteria of selectivity.

That said, there are two things that can be said in response to Fermer's appeal to the Cappadocians against Gunton. First, while Fermer may be correct in saying of the Cappadocians that they employed a variety of strategies and concepts to safeguard the trinitarian unity (*ousia*, *monarchia*, *schesis*, *physis*, *koinonia*, single *energia*, an attack on "divine arithmetic"), he needs to show in more detail than he does how this observation negates Gunton's work (or Zizioulas'). In fairness to Gunton, most of the concepts mentioned by Fermer are found in various places in his corpus, and thus Gunton's work needs to be addressed *as a whole*, as Fermer does with the Cappadocians'. Since Fermer would hardly mean that in every single place the Cappadocians treated all the strategies and terms on equal basis, so the same should hold true of Gunton's work. Each piece of his work has a different focus according to which different words are chosen and employed. Even in this passage, as an example, four of the concepts listed by Fermer (*ousia*, *hypostaseis*, *koinonia* and *schesis*) are used to express the idea of the being of God as a communion of the three persons. It is indeed a kind of selectivity, yet not the kind pictured by the critic but rather the kind that selects and uses different concepts according to an overarching idea. The latter should not be particularly unique to Gunton's work. He simply had particular challenges and situations to respond to for which he uses various concepts in his ways just as Fermer thinks the Cappadocians did.[92] Yet Gunton is unfairly treated by the critics who also operate a similar kind of conceptual selectivity despite their emphasis on the importance of unity or balance. In their works, for example, *ousia* and *physis* are given more prominence than *koinonia* and *schesis*, with *hypostasis* and *monarchia* barely featuring in their positive arguments. If their response is that it is only for the sake of recovering the lost balance the question is whether the same is not true of the prominence of *koinonia* and *schesis* in Gunton's work.

Secondly, while Fermer implies that Gunton's conceptual selectivity is problematic because it is selective and disruptive of the trinitarian unity that the Cappadocians laboured to achieve, his use of the word "unity" is questionable. As discussed previously, Fermer uses unity in two different ways, one in a broad sense close to

[92] Fermer, 'Limits,' 165.

harmony, and the other in a narrower sense attached to *ousia* in the same way as distinction is attached to *hypostasis*. What can be added here is that he operates them as a double standard against Gunton. When speaking positively of the Cappadocians' works, he uses "unity" in its broader sense that has a hermeneutical independence over both *ousia* and *hypostasis*.[93] When dealing with Gunton's work, however, Fermer's use of the word shifts to its narrower sense attached to *ousia* (oneness) and not *hypostaseis* (threeness).[94] If that is the case there are two remarks that can be made: first, Gunton's speaking of God as communion of the three persons is about the ontological "shape" of the being of God revealed in Scripture and believed by Christians; and, second, that is possible only on the basis of the *ousianic* unity advocated by Fermer as well as the *hypostatic* distinction emphasised by Gunton. The absence of further arguments provided by Fermer begs the question whether his critique of Gunton could not be understood in the very terms in which he frames Gunton's work, only in an opposite way, namely a privileging of certain concepts (principally *ousia*) over others (mainly *koinonia*) without stating the criteria of their selectivity.

4. *Balance*. The concept of balance plays an important role for both Fermer and Nausner in their critiques of Gunton, functioning as *the* measure by which they identify problems and *the* standard against which they make suggestions.[95] The argument to consider here is that Gunton destroys the kind of balance that the critics find in the works of the Cappadocians.[96] There are three responses that we can consider according to the kind of balance spoken of by the critics. The first is about the balance between 'the oneness and threeness of God, the unity and distinctness,' which Fermer argues the Cappadocians attempted to achieve in their responses to the Sabellians and Eunomians but is disrupted by the idea of being as communion promoted by Gunton and Zizioulas.[97] This argument has already been touched on in dealing with the issue of unity.[98] To repeat, whilst it is possible to take the promotion of the idea of the being of God as a communion of the persons as disruptive of the balance between the oneness and threeness of God, it is equally possible to view that as having been done on the basis of that balance, because its promotion supposes that Father, Son and Spirit are all divine, but one God and not

[93] Cf. Fermer, 'Limits,' 164 and 166.
[94] Fermer, 'Limits,' 166.
[95] See Fermer, 'Limits,' 166f; Nausner, 'Failure,' 413–6.
[96] For Fermer and Nausner, the *being-as-communion* thesis, priority of the particular over the universal, one-sided emphasis on relationality, and the reduction of substance to communion all contribute to destroying of the balance they find in the works of the Cappadocians.
[97] Fermer, 'Limits,' 166f.
[98] §3.2.3.

three (threeness in *ousianic* unity), and that the one God is Father, Son and Spirit (oneness in *hypostatic* distinction).[99]

Nausner provides another type of balance by speaking of balance in link with the 'distinction between assumed opposites or orders of priority such as substance and relation, body and mind, subject and object.'[100] It is in this broad sense, particularly in reference to the balance between relations and parts, that Nausner says, 'If the balance is lost we have nowhere to go.'[101] If this is said with Gunton in mind, as it appears to be, a simple response can be made by showing places in his work where such a balance is rather supposed, maintained and even promoted. One example is a passage quoted by Fermer, in which Gunton warns of the danger of defining persons as relations by saying that 'it tends to define the personal in terms of the impersonal, and that it therefore muddies the waters, making it difficult to speak of relations *between* persons that are so important if we are to hold the unity and threeness of God in appropriate tension and balance.'[102] While the concern to "hold the unity and threeness of God in appropriate tension and balance" confirms the point made above, we might take the caution about "defining persons as relations" as an indication that Gunton, too, is wary of the problem of reducing person to relation or identifying them.[103]

There is a third kind of balance that Nausner argues the Cappadocians maintained but is abandoned by Gunton, i.e., the balance between 'substance' and 'communion.'[104] What the critic means by the balance here is not clear from the information given, and even the Cappadocian passage he provides does not contain the word "substance" or "communion," let alone have them in "balance."[105] The reader might follow that by correlating "the common" in the citation with substance, but then the next expected correlation of "the peculiar" with communion can be done only with a difficulty because the traditional correlate of the peculiar is "hypostasis" and not communion. Yet this appears to be what Nausner means by the balance between substance and

[99] Even the priority of the particular over the universal would require such balance as a precondition for its operation.
[100] Nausner, 'Failure,' 415. In Nausner the use of balance is more frequent and complex than we find in Fermer. See, 'failure,' 414–8.
[101] Nausner, 415. Not clear who Nausner has in view.
[102] *PTT* 200. Gunton's emphasis, as cited by Fermer, 'Limits,' 181 n.94, though with an incorrect page number.
[103] Cf. §§2.5 & 6.
[104] See Nausner, 'Failure,' 414f.
[105] It hardly draws Nausner's attention that the Cappadocian passage he uses has a movement from the common to the peculiar, as we will see later.

communion, namely the balance between the common (*ousia*) and the peculiar (*hypostasis*). That is confirmed later when he says of 'the necessity of keeping an appropriate balance between the concepts of the one *ousia* and the three *hypostaseis* (and *koinonia*).'[106] What is revealed, then, is an operation of the concept of balance as an impassable divide between two realms, with communion forced to stay in the realm of *hypostasis*. Perhaps this balance only, operated in such a binding way, explains why Nausner finds Gunton's talk of the being of God as communion so problematic.[107] Interestingly, however, Fermer has an argument that the Cappadocians used the concept of *koinonia* in link to *ousia* rather than *hypostasis*, as in "communion of nature" (*physis koinonia*) or "community of essence" (*ousias koinotas*).[108] Accordingly, Gunton's communion of persons has nothing to do with the Cappadocian *koinonia*. The former is not simply a misuse of the latter, but they are two different things. While this is a matter to be examined later over the works of the Cappadocians, it can be said here that the difference of the place of *koinonia* in Fermer and Nausner in their common argument for balance can be taken as indicating that Nausner has mistaken Fermer, meaning there is no support for his argument from the Cappadocians, or that their works countervail each other.

Nausner argues, finally, for the balance between relationality and particularity.[109] To respond from Gunton's position first, it is doubtful whether the argument for this balance can carry a point against Gunton who not only puts the emphasis on relationality but also maintains particularity in doing so. In the passage under discussion, after speaking of the being of God as communion of the persons, which is for the critics *the* example of Gunton's emphasis on relationality, he continues to speak of the persons as each having a distinct way of being. A further example is his development of the transcendentality of perichoresis, substantiality and relationality, the three in balance to each other, if not by result then at least by intention. Interestingly, Nausner argues also for relationality as a hermeneutical device against the reductive move he finds in Gunton. It is interesting because a strict operation of Nausner's arguments for the

[106] Nausner, 'Failure,' 416.
[107] It is interesting, though, that despite their common claim, Nausner speaks of balance in a slightly different sense from Fermer. Balance in Fermer is equivalent to harmony, both standing over the distinction between oneness and threeness, unity and distinctness, *ousia* and *hypostasis*, whereas balance in Nausner is much closer to the conceptual distinction itself, as we saw. However, there is a similarity between Nausner's use of balance and Fermer's use of unity against Gunton in that they use unity or balance as a double standard, i.e., approvingly of the Cappadocian works and critically of Gunton's work mainly in their narrower senses.
[108] See Fermer, 'Limits,' 165.
[109] See Nausner, 'Failure,' 415f.

balance between relationality and particularity and for the use of relationality as a hermeneutical device would be counteractive to each other, demanding the balance to pull relationality towards particularity as a concept of ontological significance, thus weakening his critique of Gunton's ontological use of relationality and his suggestion of relationality as a hermeneutical device against reductionism, or particularity towards relationality as a hermeneutical device alongside relationality, hence contravening his ontological argument for particularity.

5. *Priority*. According to what Gunton says in this passage, the priority of the particular over the universal is his interpretation of the Cappadocian theology.[110] For Fermer, however, it is 'an unwarranted assumption which has crept into the argument.'[111] While this is another issue to be examined in reference to the Cappadocian work, the point to note here is that Gunton speaks about or from the works of the Cappadocians. The priority of the particular over the universal may be an idea absent in their works, or Gunton may be mistaken in interpreting them as moving from knowing the *hypostaseis* to speaking of the *ousia*, yet neither the priority nor the movement is a product of Gunton's innovation, but both are what he understands by the Cappadocian theology. Fermer challenges, however,

> Why can it not be held that there is one God, and that certain attributes are shared in common between the three *hypostaseis* of that one God, yet not purely as a result of their relationality, but because of their common *ousia*, which provides the grammar of unity?[112]

This question is the only argument provided by Fermer against Gunton's speaking of the priority of the particular over the universal, yet it sounds like an argument from a personal understanding rather than an established view of the Cappadocians. That said, it is questionable whether Gunton ever denies the existence of one God, or the three *hypostaseis* of that one God, or certain attributes shared in common between them. There is a notion of oneness that he denies, but not the idea of oneness itself.[113] He speaks of the three hypostases of the one God, though not as three parts of the one God. He does not deny the idea of the three hypostases sharing certain attributes in common,

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[110] For an approving observation, cf. Schwöbel, 'Shape,' 192 and Harvey, 'Double *Homoousion*,' 93. For some basic principles going with the priority of the particular or person, see Webster, 'Gunton,' 21f.
[111] Fermer, 'Limits,' 166. Repeated in Nausner, 'Failure,' 414.
[112] Ibid. Questions are the main ways whereby Fermer advances his argument against Gunton and Zizioulas, though most of them, like this one, are not pursued and yet nevertheless function for his follower as if proven points.
[113] See, e.g., *PTT* 10; *CF* 84, 183.

yet nor does he pursue that either.[114] It is not certain what Fermer is referring to when he says that for Gunton *it* is 'purely as a result of their relationality' and for him *it* is 'because of their common *ousia*.' It could be the oneness of God or the sharing of certain attributes in common between the three *hypostaseis* or both. In any case, he needs to show where Gunton says of them 'purely as a result of their relationality.' In the passage, indeed, we have 'God is what he is only as a communion of persons,' yet that is neither against oneness nor sharing of attributes but about the substance of God in the qualified sense of it as what God really is.

As for "the grammar of unity" that Fermer says is provided by the common *ousia,* there is a complexity to take into account, since it is not certain what he means by "unity." There are two possibilities since, as we saw, he uses the word in two different ways. One way is found in his argument that the Cappadocians' use of a variety of strategies and concepts is part of their attempt 'to safeguard the trinitarian unity.'[115] Unity in this case has a broad sense, standing over conceptual distinctions of various concepts used by the Cappadocians. If unity in that broad sense is what Fermer has in mind when he says that Gunton suspends the grammar of unity, he needs to show why giving the particular a priority over the universal suspends the grammar of unity when it could be taken as a different way of maintaining the balance. That said, Fermer has another usage of unity in operation, as we can see it in this question: 'Was it not the case that the Cappadocians were precisely attempting to achieve a harmony, a balance between the oneness and threeness of God, the *unity* and distinctness in their responses to the Sabellians and Eunomians?'[116] While "harmony" in the early part of this citation is close to the concept of unity in its broad sense considered above, the latter part shows the other sense of unity, i.e., unity attached to the concept of *ousia* that is distinguished from *hypostasis* that is associated with the idea of distinctness. If this is what Fermer has in mind in the case under consideration, as indicated by both the proximity between the two citations above and the promotion of the idea of unity as provided by the *ousia* common to the three *hypostaseis* with certain attributes shared in common between them, then we might say that unity in that narrower sense is not suspended by Gunton but supposed. Otherwise, he would not have anything to prevent him from speaking of the three hypostases as not all divine or as three Gods. It is, rather, upon the supposition

[114] This is also true of the Cappadocians, as we shall see in the next chapter.
[115] Fermer, 'Limits,' 164.
[116] Fermer, 'Limits,' 166f. Emphasis added.

of the *ousianic* unity (thus unity in narrow sense) that he further speaks of the being of God as a communion of the three hypostases.[117]

6. *Particularity*. The argument that Gunton dissolves the concept of particularity into the concept of relationality or the mark of relation is also commonly advanced by Fermer and Nausner.[118] The first response is to highlight that the critics' treatment of the passage under current discussion is unbalanced, if not biased. To quote in full what they use only in part, 'God is what he is only as a communion of persons, the particularity of whom remains at the centre of all he is, for each has his own distinctive way of being or τρόπος ὑπάρξεως.'[119] One can hardly miss the concentration on particularity in this passage without ignoring what is said in it, especially in the second and the third sentences or clauses.[120] Yet that is what is done by Nausner and Fermer with exclusive focus on the first clause.[121] We may abstain from making a comment on Fermer for the reason that he uses the passage not to discuss the matter of particularity. Nausner, too, may be justified in using only the first part of the passage as his attention at the point of his citation of the passage is not yet on the question of particularity. The problem is that even later, when arguing for particularity, Nausner does not consider Gunton's concentration on particularity in this passage.[122]

It is questionable, secondly, why Nausner argues for particularity against Gunton over a passage in which it is Gunton's prime concern, as noted above, unless the critic has a different concept of particularity. A hint is given in his defence of the idea of person as 'a single, and thus unique matter-mind-stuff, entity, which is also able to influence and constitute the relations and without which there would be no relations at all.'[123] From the given information, it is not easy to know what it is being defended here against

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[117] As discussed at §2.1.
[118] Fermer, 'Limits,' 175–184; Nausner, 'Failure,' 415f.
[119] *OTM*, 191.
[120] Also said in the immediately following passage is this: '*Therefore*—and here we move from our understanding of the creator to a notion of transcendentality—the particularity of created beings is established by the particularity at the heart of the being of the creator' (ibid).
[121] Fermer's long citation abruptly ends after the second part of the citation (b), which even is not cited by Nausner.
[122] We might add that two chapters of Gunton's book of the Bampton Lectures are dedicated to the question of particularity, the seventh chapter to developing an answer to the problem discussed in the second. Speaking of the former chapter, Gunton states that 'the proposals in this chapter are among the most important of the work,' as 'an answering attempt to develop a way of dealing with the particularity of things that does not reduce them, as do so many of the pressures of modern life, to a bland homogeneity' (5). For others' observation of the same feature, cf. Paul Cumin, 'The Taste of Cake: Relation and Otherness with Colin Gunton and the Strong Second Hand of God,' in Harvey, *Gunton*, 82 n.39.
[123] Nausner, 'Failure,' 415.

Gunton's work. Whatever it is, however, because the critic advances it against Gunton, it can be assumed that it is something different from what he finds in Gunton. That is "singularity," as noted by Nausner later,[124] and perhaps singularity as personal singleness or numerical oneness or ontological sameness, as speculated from what he says in reliance on the works of Fermer and Harris.[125] Obviously, this is not the concept of particularity about whose loss in the modern context Gunton is so concerned, which is rather to do with the particularity of things whereby we know them as what they are and not as something else.[126] That is, particularity in reference to what a particular thing really is in distinction from others within as well as without the genera or species that they belong to. Gunton wants to save that notion of particularity from the tendency to pare the true personhood down to abstract qualities supposedly held in common.[127] He may have failed to provide a solution, as argued by Nausner, yet it is up to the critic to show how an emphasis on the idea of the person as "a single entity" or "unique mind-matter-stuff" provides a better condition for exploring an answer to the question of particularity, particularity even in the sense of singularity.

Thirdly, while both Fermer and Nausner point to Gunton's use of relationality as the main cause of the problem, their use of relationality is not without a problem. For example, they tend to treat relationality, perichoresis and communion all as relational terms and so interchangeable for the same purpose.[128] Clearly, these terms have similar meanings, but they need to be considered carefully when dealing with Gunton's work because they are brought in at different stages of its development and when used together play different roles. Our passage is an example in which different terms are used together for expressing a single idea: that the being (*ousia*) of God is a communion (*koinonia*), constituted by what the three persons (*hypostaseis*) are to and from each

[124] For Nausner's use of the word "singularity," see 'Failure,' 416 and 419.
[125] As noted previously, they are all concerned about "personal identity" ('what it is to be the same person over time') in distinction from "personhood" ('what it is to be a person'). Fermer, 'Failure,' 181 n.96 and H. A. Harris, 'Should we say that personhood is relational?', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 51, 1998, 214–34, in particular 216f.
[126] As noted by Nausner himself. See 'Failure,' 412.
[127] See, for example, Gunton's discussion in *OTM* 46, 47 and 49.
[128] For example, Nausner's discussion of the problems of relationality in Gunton progresses from a critique of "perichoresis" as proceeding to 'the higher level of a unifying principle, suddenly connecting the two distinct concepts on a meta-level' ('Failure,' 413), through an appraisal of "communion" as 'raised to the level of ontological primacy,' effectively 'reducing the classical concept of substance to the concept of communion' (414), to a proposal in these words: 'To put matters in a nutshell, in regard to the doctrine of God, the concept of "relationality" must not evoke a new kind of universal, which immediately becomes a new form of reductionism, but rather it should be used as a hermeneutical device against reductionism and thus remind us of the necessity of keeping an appropriate balance between the concepts of the one *ousia* and the three *hypostaseis* (and *koinonia*)' (416).

other (*schesis*) in eternal perichoresis (*perichoresis*). Whether this correctly represents Cappadocian theology is not the question here, which is whether it can be appreciated properly if approached from a perspective that treats the three terms (*schesis*, *communion*, *perichoresis*) homogeneously and without differentiation.

There is one last problem that needs to be addressed before we leave the current discussion. That is, Fermer and Nausner develop arguments against others which are then applied to Gunton. For example, Nausner discusses David Cunningham's suggestion of viewing 'the Trinity as relations without remainder' to make the argument that '[t]he result is that the notion of the subject tends to vanish completely, and particularity gains its meaning solely as a derivation from the concepts of polyphony and participation.'[129] There is no link established between Cunningham and Gunton but, nonetheless, this example constitutes an important element of Nausner's argument against Gunton, despite no evidence showing that Gunton suggests a view of the Trinity as relations without remainder. As shown already in this study and even noted by Fermer,[130] Gunton does not reduce persons to relations,[131] at least by intent, nor does he speak of the Trinity only as relations but as persons *and* relations and the latter as 'relations *between* persons.'[132] In the case of Fermer, we have the argument that 'this is to sacrifice numerical identity at the altar of qualitative identity, and hence to deny a basis from which personal being can relate.'[133] While this is directed to Zizioulas,[134] whether it is correct or not, it would not be appropriate if Fermer assumed without providing evidence that the same argument applies to Gunton. While Fermer draws attention to the *human* side of a human person,[135] Gunton stresses the *person* side yet without dismissing the common side. To say in Cappadocian terms, Gunton's move is

[129] Nausner, 'Failure,' 415 n.45, in reference to David Cunningham, *These Three are One: The Practice of Trinitarian Theology*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1988, with no page numbers given.
[130] §3.2.1., and Fermer, 'Limits,' 181 n.94.
[131] Cf. *PTT* 39 and 200.
[132] *PTT* 200. In *OTM* 194, 'ontology and relation, stand or fall together rather than are opposed approaches to the way we understand things.'
[133] Fermer, 'Limits,' 182. 'Numerical identity' and 'qualitative identity' are terms borrowed from Harris, 'relational?', 214–34, yet it is an article that cannot be easily used for arguing against Gunton because what it argues against (e.g., confusion of personhood and personality) is not what Gunton argues for and what it argues for (e.g., ontological priority of persons over relations) is not what Gunton argues against.
[134] In reference to Zizioulas' application of the Cappadocian distinction between the *what* (*ti*) and the *how* (*hopos* or *pos*) to anthropology in a way to transcend the former (human nature or biological existence, or "numerical identity") for the sake of the latter (personhood, or "qualitative identity"). Cf. J. Zizioulas, 'The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity: The significance of the Cappadocian contribution,' in C. Schwöbel (ed.), *Trinitarian Theology Today: Essays on divine being and act*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995, 44–60 (55).
[135] Fermer, 'Limit,' 182f, with reference to David McNaughton, 'The Importance of Being Human,' in David Cockburn (ed.), *Human Beings*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

not to *hypostasis* (the person) away from *ousia* (the human), or simply from the former to the latter, so much as from *ousia* (a *human* person) through *hypostasis* (a human *person*) to *ousia* (not back to the *human* person but *this* human person).[136] The second *ousia* may be not found in the Cappadocians, but that is what we understood Gunton meant by *ousia* in such a passage as the one under discussion.

3.3. Conclusion

The point of the foregoing discussion is not to say that Gunton's work is immune to challenges and critiques. One point is to show that the specific problems identified by his critics are not problems residing in Gunton's work itself so much as problems formed by particular ways whereby they approach the matter, including superficial readings of Gunton's texts, ignoring the complexity of his conceptuality and operating different understandings of theological terms. Another is to note that the critics have contributed to highlighting the areas in Gunton's work that may be ambiguous to some eyes open to misunderstanding and to raising the need to examine the works of the Cappadocians as the common source of Gunton's project and its criticisms. Among the questions raised during the course of discussion are the following five: (a) whether the Cappadocians really worked for the balance between *ousia* (unity, oneness) and *hypostasis* (distinction, threeness) as the main goal of their work, or whether they rather worked through them towards an articulation of something else as we saw in Gunton; (b) whether they had the concept of *koinonia* as strictly attached to the realm of *hypostasis* as in Nausner's argument, or equally strictly to the realm of *ousia* as argued by Fermer, or even whether the Cappadocians' use of the concept is ambiguous, with room for different understandings; (c) whether Gunton's speaking of God as communion of persons has nothing to do with the Cappadocian theology, or if it is truer to its source than has been suggested by critics; (d) whether or not the Cappadocians gave priority to the particular over the general and moved from knowing the *hypostaseis* to speaking of the *ousia*; and (e) whether there is any resonance in the works of the Cappadocians of what we understood in terms of two concepts of *ousia* in Gunton.

[136] §3.1.5.c.

Chapter 4 *Ousia, Hypostasis* and *Koinonia*

In approaching to the question as to whether Gunton is mistaken in his understanding and use of Cappadocian theology, as some are now realising that they were,[1] or whether his critics are mistaken in saying so, especially over the issues discussed in the previous chapters, there are two preliminary observations to consider regarding any use of the works of the Cappadocians. The first concerns the statement that 'whether one can talk of a unified "Cappadocian theology" is something of debate in Patristic scholarship.'[2] Fermer comments that he does not intend to take a side in his critique of Gunton's and Zizioulas' use of the Cappadocians' theology but, nonetheless, his critique begins with a challenging note that 'they assume that there is such a thing as a "Cappadocian theology".'[3] The preference implied by the challenge is to avoid referring to *the* Cappadocian theology, even *a* Cappadocian theology, and treat the three theologians separately. In this study, however, "Cappadocian theology," as singular and without an article is used for two reasons. Firstly, it simply follows Gunton's approach, in the belief that, with regard to these teachings, the three Cappadocians share sufficient commonalities to be treated together, and with the doubt that Gunton is unaware that there are differences between the theologies of Basil of Caesarea, his brother Gregory of Nyssa and their friend Gregory of Nazianzus.[4] Secondly, using alternatives like "Cappadocian theologies" or using only individual references such as "Basil's theology" or "Gregory of Nazianzus' theology" are not much more satisfactory. For, while there are cases when they need to be treated individually or plurally, perhaps in most cases, there are also cases when they need to be treated together.[5] Furthermore, a strict application of the logic behind the concern about diversity against any unified treatment would require that we should not even say 'St Paul's theology,' 'St.

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[1] Cf. Holmes, *Trinity*, 199; Fred Sanders, 'Redefining Progress in Trinitarian Theology: Stephen R. Holmes on the Trinity,' in Noble and Sexton, *Trinity*, 20.
[2] Fermer, 'Limits,' 164 n.28.
[3] Fermer, 'Limits,' 164.
[4] Cf. Gunton, 'Trinity,' 939. Fermer appears to take Brooks Otis, 'Cappadocian Thought as a Coherent System,' *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 12, 1958, 95–124, as arguing against talking even of Cappadocian theology. If he does, it needs to be pointed out that the paper is about ' thought,' singular, beginning with a general recognition of 'the agreement of thought among the three great s' (96), expressing its aim as 'to trace the main lines of their system and to indicate where it was and where it was not logically coherent' (97), the area given not enough explicit attention then, and having as one of its concluding words, 'More positively there is an *agape* in the Platonic *eros* of Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa—also in Origen—which is neither Platonism nor Augustinianism' (124).
[5] Fermer refers to Anthony Meredith, *The Cappadocians*, London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1995, for his argument that 'in his section on "the Cappadocians and the Trinity" he treats each Father separately,' yet that section in fact is a part of Chapter Six, "The Cappadocian achievement," which is devoted to saying more about 'the specific contribution made by each separately and all together to the doctrine of the Trinity and to Christology' (102).

Augustine's theology,' 'Karl Barth's theology,' and so on, let alone 'Latin theology' or 'Byzantine Theology.'[6] Interestingly, despite their outcry for sensitivity to individual differences, Gunton's critics tend to treat him indiscriminately with others like Zizioulas and Moltmann in the areas in which they are clearly different, perhaps more different than Basil's theologies are different from Gregory of Nyssa's theologies.[7]

Secondly, although Cappadocian theology plays a significant role in his work, Gunton may be seen as having provided little reference to the Cappadocian works as such, though that is not the case in his later works. That said, the lack of reference is not particularly problematic but, rather, can be taken as a stylistic matter, which allowed Gunton to focus on the matters of his interest and purpose.[8] Whilst he could have provided more information in references, even with detailed exegeses, this would not necessarily be any more satisfactory because, even if he had done so, there would still be those who might find that insufficient. The need is, rather, to focus on what he actually did with the materials that he used. For it would be quite problematic if he had indeed misunderstood or misrepresented the materials he appropriated for his theses. Hence the main purpose of this chapter is to examine whether that is the case. For that purpose, we shall look at the Cappadocian letter, entitled *To his Brother Gregory* (or *Peter*), *On the difference between* ousia *and* hypostasis.[9] The reason is twofold. First, this letter is commonly used by Gunton for his argument and by Fermer for his critique of Gunton's use of it. Secondly, therefore, the letter can be used as the common authority against which to examine the validity of Gunton's work and Fermer's (and others') critiques of it.

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[6] The diversity of theories about the Father, Son and Holy Spirit has led some to run a blog called 'trinities' (http://trinities.org/blog/). If what is meant is more than a stimulation, then someone can run a blog, say, "gods" or "gods of those who call themselves christians."

[7] Cf. Otis, 'Cappadocian,' 98, which locates Gregory of Nyssa's originality in his development of a body of inherited ideas from his seniors, Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus.

[8] The same can be said about Gunton's uses of the Bible, Irenaeus, Barth, Coleridge, and so on, as similar complaints are made against them. An insight into Gunton's way or style is provided by Holmes, '*Analogia*,' 43, as he speaks about Gunton taking up a hint from tradition and making it his own and in particular about his excitement after reading a few paragraphs of John Duns Scotus on theological language. If Holmes is referring to it as a shortcoming I would like to point out that the style itself cannot be a problem for a systematic theologian for whom, as will be argued later, the question is not how many texts are used but how they are related to each other or whether even a single text is correctly used or not.

[9] Hereafter, *Ep*. 38, in due recognition of the debate about its authorship, which Gunton is also fully aware of. See *PTT* 10. Fermer's "Basil's (Gregory of Nyssa's) letter 38" only reflects that the authorship of the treatise is still in dispute. For a brief introduction of the matter, see Lucian Turcescu, *Gregory of Nyssa and The Concept of Divine Persons*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, 47f, and G. Maspero, M. D. Espositi, and D. Benedetto, 'Who wrote Basil's Epistular 38? A Possible Answer through Quantitative Analysis,' in J. Leemans and M. Cassin (eds), *Gregory of Nyssa:* Contra Eunomium *III*, Leiden: Brill, 2010, 579–94, both assuming Gregorian authorship, the latter with the conclusion that '*Ep*. 38 was very probably written by Gregory of Nyssa. … the statistical probability of error in this attribution is less than 5%' (591f).

4.1. *Ep*. 38 and the issues of context, form and sense

Gunton uses *Ep*. 38 for three purposes. The first is to draw attention to the Cappadocians' innovation achieved in the process of the development of Christian theology: 'God is "a sort of continuous and indivisible community"' (the *communion* passage hereafter).[10] By this Gunton means to say that the Cappadocians provided further conceptual tools for explaining the teaching of the *homoousios*.[11] The second is to argue from there that the conceptual clarification achieved by the Cappadocians is what Augustine failed to appropriate and thereby 'allowed the return of a Hellenism in which being is not communion, but something underlying it.'[12] The third purpose is to reclaim the ontology of God established by the Cappadocians to speak of 'a oneness consisting in the inseparable relation of Father, Son and Spirit.'[13]

For Fermer, however, Gunton's use of this Cappadocian letter is problematic in the following three respects in particular.[14] Two are given in his argument that Gunton, along with Zizioulas, uses the *communion* passage for the *being-as-communion* thesis out of context and in a wrong sense:[15] *out of context,* because the context in which the passage is located is where the common *ousia* is affirmed, followed by a list of the general qualities predicable of it; and *in a wrong sense,* because what is said in the passage is not that '*koinonia = ousia,* rather that *what is in common* or what is the source of unity is the *ousia*.'[16] Fermer's third point against Gunton is that the most common form in which *koinonia* is used in relation to the Trinity in the works of Basil and Gregory of Nyssa is as part of a compound noun like in "community of essence"

[10] *PTT* 10 and 94. This *communion* passage is also used in *CF* 186 and Gunton, 'Trinity,' 939, 941, the latter showing the source of the "community" language when his main use is "communion." That is, Maurice F. Wiles and Mark Santer (eds), *Documents in Early Christian Thought*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975, 34. There are at least two differences between Gunton's way of using the source as this and what we read in the text itself: ἀλλά τινα συνεχῆ καὶ ἀδιάσπαστον κοινωνίαν ἐν αὐτοῖς θεωρεῖσθαι. As they are clear now, the first difference concerns Gunton's use of the word "God," which is not in the text, and the second the place of the cited phrase in the original as the grammatical subject of the sentence. Devoid of the problems, the translation presented by Fermer is closer to the text, that is, '"What we see here is a sort of continuous and indivisible community"' (op. cit., 165). That said, the translation is not an issue between them, nor for us, as Fermer raises no voice against Gunton's.
[11] *PTT* 8–12; 'Trinity,' 938f. Cf. also, Zizioulas, *Being*, 83–9.
[12] *PTT* 10. 'That is the matrix out of which the objectionable features of Western "theism" have arisen: 'the breach between East and West and the dualism of which Barth and Rahner have made us aware, between God's "being" and his "becoming", and between the one God and the triune' (10f).
[13] *PTT* 10. For Gunton's position against a unitary conception of the oneness, see *PTT* 104f; *OTM* 24f; *CF* 84 and 181.
[14] All given in Fermer, 'Limits,' 165.
[15] For this argument, Fermer gives no reference to Gunton's or Zizioulas'.
[16] Fermer, 'Limits,' 165.

(*ousias koinotas*) or "communion of nature" (*physis koinonia*).[17] Gunton must have responded to this critique[18] but, as noted previously, no formal response to it is available in print. The situation, then, is that Fermer's critique is still open to be used as a basis for further criticisms of Gunton's work, as is done by Nausner in his critique of Gunton's transcendental project.[19]

All the above—the importance of Cappadocians' works for Gunton's own programme, especially *Ep*. 38, Fermer's reinterpretation of the letter in his critique of Gunton's use of it for promoting the *being-as-communion* thesis and Nausner's utilising of Fermer's work for his own critique of Gunton's transcendental project—point to the need for a reconsideration of this relevant letter in order to determine whether Gunton misappropriates it, or whether Fermer's interpretation of it is mistaken, or whether there is a sense in which both have problems or each has a point. What follows is a response to these questions, comprised of discussions of the issues of *context*, *form* and *sense* as they are raised by Fermer, and an interpretation of *Ep*. 38. In all these matters, to say in advance, Gunton's work appears to be more in accord with the text he draws on than Fermer's reinterpretation of it may suggest.[20]

4.2.1. Context

Fermer's first objection to Gunton's use of the *communion* passage is that 'the opening of the paragraph that contains it, begins with an affirmation of the common *ousia*.'[21] Although it is not clear what Fermer means by the "opening of the paragraph,"[22] I assume that he refers to "in the community of substance," the phrase occurring at the beginning of the passage under discussion. If so a simple reply would be to point out that that phrase in fact occurs in a passage in which what is affirmed as a whole is the distinct notes of the *hypostases*, not the common *ousia*. If this observation is correct the

[17] As noted previously when comparing the place of communion in Fermer's account of the Cappadocians and Nausner's. For examples of the phrases in the Cappadocian works, see the references given by Fermer, 'Limits,' 165.
[18] As is indicated by Fermer himself in 'Limits,' 158 n.1.
[19] §3.2.
[20] Text and translations used for discussion are Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (eds), *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Volume 8. St. Basil: Letters and Select Works*, tr. B. Jackson, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1895, 137–41; and Goold, George P (ed.), *Saint Basil. The Letters*, tr. Roy J. Deferrari, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1926, 196–226.
[21] Fermer, 'Limits,' 165.
[22] The ambiguity is due to the lack of reference or citation given. The same is the case with the critic's mention of "the next paragraph" just a sentence later, although this time a citation is provided and so we can identify its location, which however is near the end of the section, thus compounding what he means by "paragraph."

phrase could hardly be used for such a *context* argument as Fermer's against Gunton's use of the *communion* passage.

Fermer is correct in noticing that 'the sentence which precedes it lists the qualities shared in common to be predicated of that common essence,'[23] yet its force against Gunton is not sufficiently strong enough: a list of common qualities preceding the *communion* passage does not necessarily mean that the concept of *koinonia* used there does not refer to the "community of persons." Rather, the reason is that it is difficult to find a direct textual link between the list of *common-qualities* and the *community* sentence that so commands an interpretation of the latter in the light of the former. Rather, there is a clause occurring between the two sentences and not mentioned by Fermer, in which the three persons are clearly affirmed: "I am speaking of the Father, the Son and the Spirit."[24] This is an important clause for a correct interpretation of the *communion* passage, at least as important as the *common-qualities* sentence.[25] As such, Fermer should have taken it into account, rather than simply pointing to the *common-qualities* sentence as the main support for his interpretation. To the extent of his neglect of this clause Fermer's use of the *common-qualities* sentence for his *context* argument loses its efficacy.

Three more matters can be taken into consideration in response to Fermer's *context* argument in the wider context of *Ep*. 38 as a whole. The first is to do with the development of the discourse of the letter. Section 1[26] begins with an identification of some dogmatic errors of relevance to the failure to distinguish between *ousia* and *hypostasis*. Section 2 explains the conceptual difference between *ousia* and *hypostasis* by considering two kinds of nouns and introduces the analogy of the common and the

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[23] Fermer, 'Limits,' 165.
[24] *Ep*. 38.4. Turcescu's translation used.
[25] The importance can be seen in its use by two patristic scholars for different interpretations of the *communion* passage, one by Turcescu and the other by John Behr, *Formation of Christian Theology Volume 2: The Nicene Faith Part 2*, Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004. According to Behr, the *communion* passage is said simply to specify that the author is speaking of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit because the divine nature does not exist in the abstract. This understanding goes with his conclusion that 'the "certain continuous and uninterrupted communion" that appears in them is not, therefore, a "communion" or "community" *between* the persons, as the analogy of three distinct human agents might suggest, but rather the invariability of the nature that is contemplated equally in each, the continuity of the being of the Father in the Son and the Spirit' (420f). On the other hand, Turcescu, *Gregory*, 58, views the passage as signalling an abrupt change of the subject from the preceding sentence where the author gives the impression of returning to consider the divine nature in more detail. For Turcescu, therefore, the reference to the three persons indicates that the author intends to speak of a "communion of persons" in the following sentence, not "community of substance."
[26] The division here by sections follows that of *NPNF* Vol. 8, 137–41.

particular. Section 3 uses the analogy for defining the meanings of *ousia* and *hypostasis*, with a biblical example and a brief consideration of them in theology, followed by a short treatment of *ousia*. Now this is the first matter to take into consideration: by the end of section 3 the analogy of the common and the particular is well used and put in the background; it does not come to the foreground or play a major role in section 4 and thereafter.

Secondly, while *Ep*. 38 moves to section 4 for an exposition of the Trinity, the author provides a broad context for reading that section at the end of the previous section, in which he expresses his intention for the section to direct attention only to the qualities of those whereby the three hypostases are marked off—that is, peculiar properties of the persons, not the common qualities shared among them. In his words,

> since it is necessary, by means of the notes of differentiation, in the case of the Trinity, to keep the distinction unconfounded, we shall not take into consideration, in order to estimate that which differentiates, what is contemplated in common, as the uncreate, or what is beyond all comprehension, or any quality of this nature; we shall only direct our attention to the enquiry by what means each particular conception will be lucidly and distinctly separated from that which is conceived of in common.[27]

This statement of objective may not have been intended to dictate the meaning of every line of section 4, although, as a general framework supplied by the author, it might justify viewing in that light each line of the section that speaks of general features of the divine nature. However, to select and use such a line as the context for interpreting the *communion* passage is likely to result in relegating the passage itself to a secondary place or to the background, against the natural flow of the letter we have been following thus far.

The third to consider is concerned with the introduction of the analogy of the separated and the conjoined at the latter part of section 4. The analogy of the common and the particular surely plays an important role in this letter, yet only in the early parts for setting the scene and defining the meanings of *ousia* and *hypostasis*. In the latter parts of the letter, although that analogy is still present, the major role of explanation is played by the analogy of the separate and the conjoined, such as that of "chain" (section 4), "bow" (section 5), "light" (sections 6 & 7) and "image" (section 8). From section 3 onwards, in other words, the account of *ousia* and *hypostasis* by the distinction of the

[27] *Ep*. 38.3.

common and the particular gradually fades away into the background, perhaps indicating the author's awareness of its limited value in explicating the doctrine of the Trinity, while the analogy of the separate and the conjoined, introduced in section 4, continues the development of the discourse even when there appears no reason to do so, indeed if all that was needed was to explain the conceptual difference between *ousia* and *hypostasis* in terms of the common and the particular.[28]

Contextually speaking, then, the grammar of the common and the particular has two restrictions: it cannot be taken as the only tool used by the author for explaining the doctrine of the Trinity; and it cannot be the definite context for interpreting the *communion* passage. To use that analogy as the sole grammar for understanding the meaning of *koinonia* which is under consideration, even at the expense of the other analogy, can be far from being helpful or sufficient for arguing that Gunton uses the passage in disregard of the context in which it is located; for the location of the context is determined by what follows the passage as much as by what precedes it. Besides, the fact that the *koinonia* of the *communion* passage is more associated with *hypostaseis* than *ousia* makes Fermer's interpretation of it in connection to the *ousia* understood according to the grammar of the common and the particular appear no more congruent with the drive of the letter under consideration than Gunton's understanding of it in association with *hypostaseis*.

4.2.2. Form

The issue of form is raised by Fermer's challenge to Gunton (and Zizioulas) to 'explain how the phrase "communion of nature" (*physis koinonia*) or "community of essence" (*ousias koinotas*), which is the most common form in which *koinonia* is used in relation to the Trinity in the works of Basil and Gregory of Nyssa, justifies the reduction of *ousia* to *koinonia*.'[29] It has already been shown that it is better to understand Gunton's concept of *koinonia* as supporting or further predicating *ousia* than as reducing *ousia* to *koinonia*.[30] The question here is whether the critic is correct in saying that the use of *koinonia* as part of a compound noun as in the "communion of nature" or "community of essence" is the most common form found in the works of Basil and Gregory of Nyssa.

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[28] See Behr, *Formation* 2/2, 420, for an interpretation of the *communion* passage as enunciated in the context of returning to the grammatical distinction of the common and the particular.
[29] Fermer, 'Limits,' 165. Examples given by Fermer for the first phrase, "communion of nature," are Basil, *On the Holy Spirit*, 18.47; Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius*, 1.31 and 2.34. Examples of the second phrase, "communion of essence," are *On the Holy Spirit*, 17.41; *Against Eunomius*, 2.4.
[30] §§3.1.4.b and 5.b.

To deal with this question we do not need to go beyond the letter under discussion, for three reasons: Fermer's reference to the Cappadocian works is not sufficient for us to launch a full survey of all the works of Basil and Gregory of Nyssa; even within the letter itself there are enough examples over which to discuss Fermer's argument; and focus here is the word *koinonia* as it is used in *Ep*. 38 and its section 4 in particular.

The first point to be made about Fermer's challenge is that while he provides four references to the works of Basil and Gregory of Nyssa, a careful reading of *Ep*. 38 does not support his argument that *koinonia* is mostly used as part of a compound word. As noted by Turcescu, while *koinonia* is used in four different places in the letter,[31] in none of them it makes a compound noun with *ousia* or *physis*. And, in two cases, it is more directly linked to hypostases than to *ousia* or *physis*: "a certain communion is seen in them"[32] and "a certain communion and distinction is apprehended in them."[33] To be precise, therefore, it is κοινότης that is mostly used with *ousia* or *physis* to construct the compound word in Fermer's examples,[34] while *koinonia* is used in closer connection to the three of the Trinity, certainly in affirmation of the *ousia*, yet not directly as part of a compound word with *ousia*.[35]

Secondly, there would be a sense in which Fermer's *form* argument is correct, if all the *common-* words used in the letter (*koinos*, *koinotis*, *koinonia* and their variants) are treated as referring to the same thing. Here, however, we are dealing with a formal issue raised by Fermer against Gunton's use of the letter for the idea of communion of the persons. We are discussing, in other words, how the word *koinonia* is used in the works of the Cappadocians. Fermer might use other works of the Cappadocians but, as far as *Ep*. 38 is concerned, he can say what he says about the most common form in which he argues *koinonia* is used only in relation to *koinotis* or *koinos*, not *koinonia*. The only condition for that to be accepted would be given by ignoring the "formal" difference between the words used, yet it is doubtful whether that could be done without undermining the basis of Fermer's *form* argument.

[31] *Ep*. 38.2.15; 4:33, 49, 84. Turcescu's line numbers here and afterwards.
[32] *Ep*. 38.4.49.
[33] *Ep*. 38.4.83.
[34] Turcescu's examples are 2.7, 13; 3.9; 4:39, 86; 5.48, 62.
[35] This is the basis on which Turcescu propose to render κοινότης by "community" and κοινωνία by "communion," saying that *Communion* passage 'envisages the "communion of persons".' *Gregory*, 58.

Thirdly, among about 21 *common*- words occurring in the letter,[36] the particular *koinonia* used in the *communion* passage is not preceded by a definite article.[37] While more will be said about this when dealing with the *sense* issue below, it suffices here to point out that this feature can hardly be ignored in discussing a formal issue without going against the purpose, since *the* communion and *a* communion are *formally* different, much more so if they appear in that order in the same text. As an awareness of the difference is more likely to lead the critic to mention it than to ignore it, Fermer appears to have failed to discern this formal difference or, if he were aware of it, to have failed to give reasons for not addressing the matter in his interpretation of the *communion* passage, once again weakening his *form* argument.

4.2.3 Sense

Fermer continues his case against Gunton (and Zizioulas) by arguing that, while *koinonia* is being used as part of a compound noun, what it means is not 'that *koinonia* = *ousia*,' but rather 'that *what is in common* or what is the source of unity is the *ousia*.'[38] Although this *sense* argument constitutes an important part of Fermer's critique of Gunton, its strength would certainly be undermined if our discussion of the *form* issue is correct in saying that *koinonia* is not being used as part of a compound noun in the letter under discussion. It is, then, only by treating *koinotis* and *koinonia* as the same word or as having the same reference that one might be able to see any point of the first part of Fermer's *sense* argument. Yet even the latter part of the argument is made to lose its point against Gunton by the formal difference between *koinonia* and *koinotis* since what Fermer says there is not about *koinonia* or its relationship with *ousia* but about a compound noun made up of *koinotis* and *ousia* or *physis*.

Even if we ignore the formal differences between *koinonia* and *koinotis* as used in *Ep*. 38 it is still difficult to see a point in Fermer's saying in his criticism of Gunton that '*what is in common* … is the *ousia*.' Firstly, it is not a proposition that Gunton denies, because for him, just like the Cappadocian author and any reader of the letter, *ousia* is to *hypostasis* as the common is to the particular.[39] Secondly, Gunton does not attempt to

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[36] 7 of *koinotis*, 4 of *koinonia*, and about 10 of *koinos*.
[37] The passage that has the fourth occurrence of *koinonia* has also interesting formal features as we will see later.
[38] Fermer, 'Limits,' 165.
[39] At least before the complicated stage 4 discussed in the previous chapter (§3.1.), which we decided though is not a departure from the previous stages so much as a move on from them towards a conceptual clarification. Interestingly, that the same is true with *Ep*. 38 is what we will see below (§4.3.).

surmount the word *ousia* itself or such phrases as 'community of *ousia'* but simply questions the appropriateness of understanding the *ousia* (or substance) of God as something that underlies God himself.[40] Thirdly, Gunton draws on Cappadocian theology only for the reason that in it he finds an answer to his quest for a conception of the *ousia* (substance, being) of the God corresponding to the revelation of God as the Father in the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.[41] This is not fully appreciated by Fermer who, rather, suggests that Gunton is pursuing a question that the letter itself does not deal with and in a way that the author himself would not approve of. This charge needs to be examined in more detail, but here it can be said that the position from which Fermer criticises Gunton's idea of the *ousia* of God is not far from the very position that Gunton thereby wanted to overcome. Also, it is difficult to accept Fermer's saying that 'what is the source of unity is the *ousia*' without asking about the meaning of the "unity." If what he means is the unity of *ousia* or *physis*, as something not affected by the existence of the *hypostaseis* and their relations to each other, the point made above can be repeated; that such an idea of unity is in *Ep*. 38, yet features only in the early part of the letter and hardly at all in the rest. If, on the other hand, it is the trinitarian unity, i.e., the unity of the Father, the Son and the Spirit, Fermer is in effect speaking of the unity of the hypostases because *koinonia* is linked to *ousia* through its more direct link to *hypostasis*. As such, this is very close to Gunton's way of speaking of the *ousia* (of God) as a *koinonia* constituted by the three hypostases.

The resulting question is whether *ousia* is only the source of the trinitarian unity or whether there is a sense in which to think of its connection with the hypostases and the relations between them. This is one of the questions that need to be borne in mind in the discussion of the next section. Here suffice it to summarise the difference between Fermer's position and Gunton's. For Fermer, *ousia* is what is in common to the three hypostases and is the underlying source of the unity of the hypostases, while *koinonia* is to do with something of the common ownership of the general features of the *ousia*.[42] The implication is that the content of Fermer's *ousia* is not affected by how many hypostases are concerned, let alone how they are related to each other; rather, the former affects how we are to think of the latter. For Fermer, therefore, *koinonia* and hypostases have no ontological bearing on the meaning of *ousia*. For Gunton, on the other hand, the *ousia* of God is revealed only in hypostases and the relations they have with each other.

[40] §§3.1.3 and 4.c.
[41] Cf. *PTT* 9–12, 53–5 et al; *OTM* 188–95. Also, the discussion in Introduction.
[42] Fermer, 'Limits,' 165f.

Gunton does speak of the being (*ousia*, essence, substance, etc.) of God, even in later works where he has his own conception of the term,[43] yet there he tends to use it in reference to the *taxis* or shape of the relatedness that the three hypostases have with each other,[44] rather than God in a generic sense as something that we know sufficiently by knowing what divinity means, namely, *ousia* in Fermer's sense. For Gunton, therefore, the content of *ousia* is determined by the three hypostases and the relations between them. Indeed, both Fermer's and Gunton's positions have a place in *Ep*. 38, yet Fermer's understanding of *ousia* fits only with the early part of the letter with the analogy of the common and the particular (up to section 3) whereas Gunton's understanding of the being of God goes better with the later part of the letter with the analogy of the conjoined and the separated (from section 4). With these differences over the issues of *context*, *form* and *sense* in mind, we now turn to a discussion of the *communion* passage on its own terms to see in what *sense* the word *koinonia* is actually used in that controversial passage.

4.2. An interpretation of *Ep*. 38

We begin an interpretation of the Cappadocian letter at issue by reading the *communion* passage more attentively than normally done by Gunton's critics in its immediate context as follows:

> Therefore, in the *commonality* of the essence, we say, there is no compatible or *common thing* regarding those peculiar notes assigned to the Trinity whereby the particularity of the persons handed down in the faith are made known, each being apprehended distinctively by its own peculiar notes. Hence, it is by the marks just mentioned that the distinction of the persons is ascertained. Yet regarding the infinite, the incomprehensible, the uncreated, the uncircumscribed by space, and all such things, there is no variation in the life-giving nature—I am speaking of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit—but a certain continuous and unbroken *communion* is observed in them.[45]

There are three *common*- words occurring in this passage, which are marked out in italics for discussion on the hypothesis that they hold the key to the interpretation of the *communion* passage—the last sentence in the citation. To be noted before looking at them respectively is that the question for us is not whether they all *mean* the same but whether the third word is to be understood as pointing to the same thing as the first one, as in Fermer's argument, or as having an independent stance from it, as in Gunton's use of the passage. Let us begin the investigation with the first phrase that Fermer uses in

[43] §3.1.4.
[44] Cf. *PTT* 110, 145; *OTM* 207, 225; *AB* 107.
[45] *Ep*. 38.4. Turcescu's translation of *Ad Petrum* 4.45–50, as presented in *Gregory*, 58.

his criticism of what he calls the *being-as-communion* thesis.

The commonality of the essence (τῇ … κοινότητι). This can hardly be thought as something newly asserted in the passage wherein it occurs. For it presupposes some common knowledge between the communicators at the point of its enunciation. It is certainly new within the boundary of Section 4 in the sense that the phrase itself is not mentioned previously before it is mentioned here. Yet the phrase has some features that draw our attention. Firstly, the use of the definite article signals that its compound noun "commonality of *ousia*" indicates most likely something mentioned beforehand or something known commonly. The same is indicated, secondly, by the phrase being in the subordinate place within the whole passage wherein it occurs. By contrast, thirdly, there is little contextual evidence that would support a view of the phrase as decisive of the meaning of the whole passage in which it occurs, let alone the *communion* passage which comes 5 lines later. What these observations suggest is then a reading of this *koinotis* phrase as a presupposition or context for what follows, though that does not mean that it should also be in control of the meaning of the whole passage; it only plays a role of stage for the main sentence in which the following assertion is made.

There is no common thing (ἀκοινώνητα) regarding those peculiar notes assigned to the Trinity. This is what is asserted in the context provided by the pronouncement of the commonality of *ousia*. Considered within the passage in which it occurs, its salience against the *koinotis* phrase is indicated by the fact that it comes in the main clause while the commonality of *ousia* is affirmed in the subordinate. In addition, from the start of Section 4, while the author's attention is focused on showing the peculiar notes of the Father, the Son and the Spirit that distinguish them from each other, it is only here that it is stated that there is no common thing among the three regarding their peculiar notes. However, if considered in the wider context beyond the section in which it occurs, the statement that there is no common thing regarding the peculiar notes whereby the particularity of the three persons is made known is not entirely new because that has already been expressed in the previous sections with the help of the analogy of the common and the particular. The question is then whether this *akoinoeta* sentence is the main or focal point of the whole passage under consideration, or whether it is another stage for something newer to be asserted upon it. To answer this question depends on how we interpret the last sentence of the passage cited above.

We now have enough reasons for turning to the *communion* passage: *a certain (*τινα*) continuous and unbroken communion (*κοινωνίαν*) is observed in them*. The initial impression is that here the author is speaking of the communion *of essence* rather than a communion *of the persons*. Yet there are four things that may render such a reading superficial. The first concerns the terminological and formational differences between *koinotis* and *koinonia*. As shown previously, the author's consistent uses of *koinotis* in connection to *ousia* or *physis* with the definite article and of *koinonia* always with regard to the Father, the Son and the Spirit are too observable in this passage to be ignored simply on the ground of the commonality or similarity of the sense of the terms used.

Secondly, if it is the author's intention to refer to the common nature in the *communion* passage, then as Turcescu correctly points out,[46] there would be a numerical accord between "nature" and its object (communion in "it," not "them") unless a mistake has been made, which is highly unlikely. Yet the actual form we have in the text is "*a certain* communion in *them*," not "*the* communion in *it*."

The third point is concerned with the author's repeated use of the term "a certain (τινα)," perhaps for the same purpose. In section 3, he explains the introductory part of the book of Job by saying that the Joban author uses the word "a certain" to specify "Job" as a particular man called by that name, while remaining silent as to the human in general. It is reasonable to think therefore that just as the Joban author uses "a certain" in respect to Job as a particular man so the Cappadocian author places "a certain" before "communion" not so much to indicate what is already known (*the* commonality of substance or nature) as to indicate the Trinity as a subject having a particular ontological shape. To ignore the apparent parallel between the "a certain" of Section 3 and of the *communion* passage would be more objectionable than interpreting the latter in consideration of the former.

Logically, as Turcescu also points out, the Cappadocian author would not add that there is "a certain communion" of nature after saying in the same sentence that there is no difference regarding the common nature, 'because it would mean that actually there is a difference in the common nature.'[47] Turcescu does not appear to be concerned to

[46] Turcescu, *Gregory*, 58.
[47] Ibid.

support Gunton.[48] His interpretation, nonetheless, agrees better with Gunton's use of the *communion* passage than Fermer's reinterpretation of it.

That said, there is another example of "a certain" occurring in the following passage at the end of Section 4, which appears to be supporting of the argument being developed here more decisively than the previous ones:

> There is apprehended among these three *a certain ineffable and inconceivable communion and at the same time distinction*, with neither the difference between their persons disintegrating the continuity of their nature, nor this community of substance confounding the individual character of their distinguishing notes. Do not marvel if we assert that the same thing is both joined and separated, and if, as though speaking in riddles, we devise *a certain strange and paradoxical united distinction and separated conjunction*.[49]

This passage (the *distinction-and-conjunction* passage hereafter) is comprised of three major parts, together constituting the crux of the letter as a whole in that afterwards are taken no further or higher steps regarding the author's elucidation of the mystery of the Trinity. What is asserted in the first sentence, confirmed in the second and supported in the third is neither the communion of *ousia* nor the distinction among the hypostases, though both are mentioned, but "a communion and distinction" and "a certain united distinction and separated conjunction." Note that here "communion" and "distinction" are considered of the same subject, the Trinity,[50] as one in whom neither is the continuity of nature disintegrated by the difference among the *hypostaseis* nor the peculiar notes of the hypostases are confounded by the community of *ousia*. The decisive nature of this passage compared to the previous examples lies in that while there one still may ignore the word "a certain," interpreting the *koinonia* as referring to *the* communion of *ousia* or *physis*, here it is difficult to do the same with the current passage. That is not only because of the recurrence of the word "a certain" but also because of the following example given to illustrate the point being made, that is, the bow or rainbow.

It is also important that, in taking the example of rainbow, the author is not speaking of one rainbow in relation to another but only of the rainbow whose brilliance is both one

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[48] That it appears to be otherwise is suggested by his comment, somewhat abruptly added at the end of the paper: 'I should also add that, in contrast to a widespread, misinformed opinion of the twentieth century, the s did not state a priority of the persons over the substance, but kept the two together in worshiping God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as in Basil's *Ep*. 236.6' (*Gregory*, 60).
[49] *Ep*. 38.4.
[50] For Gunton, *CF* 186, the subject is God.

(continuous) and many (divided). In both cases, of course, there is an element of relation or communion, but not in reference to the same things. That is, while the first concerns the relation between one rainbow and another, fitting well with the analogy of the common and the particular, the second concerns the relation among the particulars that constitute rainbow as rainbow with that shape of being, thus corresponding better with the analogy of the conjoined and the separated. The difference between the two analogies is that the focus in the former is more on the particulars of the same kind (e.g., Paul as a man, Timothy as a man, Silas as a man, etc.), whereas the latter is more about one kind of the particulars being together in a special way (e.g., the chain having two ends so that the one who holds one end of the chain pulls the other to him at the same time). To say of the latter by examples of the former, Paul is what he is and not what Timothy also is, or the Earth is what it is and not what the Venus also is.

It is now safe to say of the *communion* passage that it is in the presupposition of "the community of *ousia* (or nature)" (and "the *hypostatic* distinction") that "*a certain* communion" is announced in a move towards the enunciation of "a certain strange and paradoxical united distinction and separated conjunction." Framing the matter this way helps us to present some considerations regarding the questions raised at the end of the previous chapter. Firstly, the second phrase ("a communion") relates not only to the first ("the community") but also to the third ("a united distinction and separated conjunction") in such a way that, if a choice is to be made, a better correlation would be made by linking the second to the third (as in Gunton and Turcescu) than to the first (as in Fermer and Behr). The reason is that while the first is concerned with the common *ousia* the second and the third are more about the general after talking of the particular notes of the hypostases. Of course, the use of *koinonia* by the Cappadocian author contains a certain degree of complexity,[51] and that might justify an interpretation of the exceptional formation in the *communion* passage, "*a certain* communion," in the light

[51] According to the discussion thus far, there are at least three different things to which *koinonia* is associated in *Ep*. 38: (a) the common *ousia* or *physis* (in link with other *common-* words); (b) anything shared in common between the three of the Trinity; and (c) one in which the three are to and from each other in the commonality of *ousia*. Of particular difficulty is the *distinction-and-conjunction* passage cited above, in which the word *koinonia* is once used, yet in connection with both the definite article directly and an indefinite article indirectly (ἀλλά τις ἄῤῥητος καί ἀκατανόητος ἐν τούτοις καταλαμβάνεται καί ἡ κοινωνία καί ἡ διἀκρισις), not surprisingly resulting in quite different translations. One is 'But the communion and the distinction apprehended in Them are, in a certain sense, ineffable and inconceivable' (Schaff and Wace, *NPNF*, 139). Another is 'there is apprehended among these three a certain ineffable and inconceivable communion and at the same time distinction' (Deferrari. *Basil*, 213. Cf. Turcescu, *Gregory*, 59).

of the more common phrase "*the* communion of essence" (Fermer),[52] or according to the grammar of the common and the particular (Behr).[53] However, secondly, such an interpretation involves problems of misunderstanding the context in which they stand and ignoring what is too obvious to be ignored, let alone the discourse movement that reaches what appears to be the acme of the letter as a whole with the enunciation of 'a certain strange and paradoxical united distinction and separated conjunction.'[54] Among those that should not be disregarded are the formal difference in the letter's use of *koinotis* and *koinonia* and its repeated use of the word *tina* for specification. And the context that must not be mistaken is that the communion of essence, if considered according to the grammar of the common and the particular, is not asserted in Section 4 and onward but rather remains at the background. What is asserted is, rather, the communion of essence among the three persons in hypostatic distinction, which is explained by the analogies of the chain and the rainbow and expressed in terms of "a certain strange and paradoxical united distinction and separated conjunction." Thirdly, that the analogy of the chain not only precedes the *distinction-and-conjunction* passage but also follows the *communion* passage is of crucial significance for our discussion, in that thereby it establishes a parallel structure between the two passages. That is to say, just as what is said in the *distinction-and-conjunction* passage is supported by the illustration of the rainbow, so the example of the chain is used for illustration of what is said in the *communion* passage. Both examples fit better with the analogy of the conjoined and the separated than with that of the common and the particular. An implication is that the *koinonia* in our passage would be much better understood prospectively in a broader sense of it meaning something similar to "a united distinction and separated conjunction" than retrospectively in a narrow sense of it indicating "the communion of the common (*ousia* or *physis*)" that stands in opposition to "the distinction of the particulars (*hypostaseis*)." If the latter is Fermer's approach which appears to take even the *ousia* in the *distinction-and-conjunction* passage as an example of the Cappadocian use of *ousia* in a generic sense[55] Gunton's is very close to the former approach in interpreting the passage as meaning that 'God is only what he is as three persons whose being is so closely bound up with one another that they together constitute one God.'[56]

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[52] Fermer, 'Limits,' 165.
[53] Behr, *Formation* 2/2, 420f.
[54] *Ep*. 38.4.
[55] Fermer, 'Limits,' 165.
[56] *CF* 186.

4.3. *Ousia* and *Koinonia*

The remaining question concerns the relationship between *ousia* and *koinonia* as they appear in *Ep*. 38, in particular over the issue of whether there is a sense in which the letter justifies Gunton's identification of the *ousia* of God with the *koinonia* of the three hypostases or confirms Fermer's objection to it with a view of the *ousia* as predicable only by the attributes of the common *physis* regardless of how the *hypostases* relate to each other. There is surely a sense in which Fermer's view of *ousia* is closer to the Cappadocian *ousia*, in that the letter has no explicit predication or identification of *ousia* with *koinonia* or *koinotis*. This might confirm the correctness of Fermer's account of the Cappadocian *ousia*, yet that does not necessarily give support to his critique of Gunton's conception of the *ousia* of God as a communion of persons.

Two things can be considered as follows. The first concerns the difference between Gunton's concept of *ousia* used in the last stage of the development of the concept of substance in his work and Fermer's concept that is put forward to counter it. For Fermer, as we saw already, *ousia* refers to nothing but what is common to the hypostases, of which one predicates general features of divine nature.[57] Yet, as we saw, this is not what Gunton means by *ousia* when speaking of the *ousia* of God in his ontological and transcendental explorations. There he does not use the term *ousia* (being, substance, etc.) in reference to that which underlies the hypostases, appearing immutably through the three persons, but to the very being whereby he apprehends the mystery of the triune God.[58] Given the difference, the weakness of Fermer's critique of Gunton's work is that he has not investigated Gunton's conception of *ousia* before criticising Gunton's identification of *ousia* with *koinonia*.

The second reason concerns the notion of *ousia* as it appears in *Ep*. 38, which, in fact, is as ambiguous as the *ousia* we found in Gunton, not straightforward as appears to be assumed by Fermer.[59] Particularly in the early part of the letter, the Cappadocian author uses *ousia* in the context of explaining two kinds of nouns—one more general like "man" and the other more particular like "Peter." Here *ousia* is used to refer to the common of the kind extending to all particulars (Peter, Andrew, John, James and so on) under the common category (man). Applied to trinitarian theology, it refers to God in its generic sense as the common nature held by the three persons, only though that is not

[57] Fermer, 'Limits,' 165f.
[58] Cf. *PTT* 145; *OTM* 191; *AB* 112; *CF* 185 et al.
[59] Fermer, 'Limits,' 166f.

final. For the author also uses *ousia* in reference to the Trinity rather than God, if we distinguish them conceptually.[60] Near the end of Section 5, for instance, we read the following:

> In the case of dogmas which transcend our comprehension faith is better than apprehension through processes of reasoning, for it teaches the distinction in *hypostasis* and the conjunction in *ousia*.[61] Since, therefore, reason has distinguished what is common and what is peculiar in the Holy Trinity, what reason shows is common is referred to the *ousia*, and the *hypostasis* is the individualizing note of each member of the Trinity.[62]

This is the place whereby the term *ousia* returns to the foreground from staying in the background throughout Section 4. Here *ousia* still refers to what is common, yet the example of illustration used in the preceding lines is the rainbow, an example of the analogy of the conjoined and the separated, in which the common is that which goes with the several colours, rather than referring to something that is common to many rainbows: as is said, 'even in our example, what flashes forth the many-coloured beam is one *ousia* … but the colour of the phenomenon is multiform.'[63] These two ways of the concept of *ousia* used in *Ep*. 38, if correct, makes it difficult to find a sense in which the letter would support Fermer's rather rigid view of *ousia* fixed to one side of the spectrum. Gunton's concept of *ousia* also appears to be one-sided, fixed to the other side of the spectrum, yet the ambiguity we find in his work reflects, at least, the ambiguity we have identified in this Cappadocian letter.

We might go further and ask what sense could be made of the two ways in which the Cappadocian author uses the concept of *ousia* as represented above. If we exclude the likelihood that the author is working with two "conflicting" or "inconsistent" concepts of *ousia*, an option considered neither by Gunton nor his critics, the remaining path would be to consider whether there is some coherence or unity that runs through them. Such an approach as Fermer's would not help to induce a move in that direction because the opposition of the two usages of *ousia* to each other is almost definite for him, each represented by his view of the Cappadocian *ousia* and by the concept of *ousia* promoted by Gunton in his understanding. An alternative approach can be made by recognising that the concept of *ousia* in *Ep*. 38 is used on three different levels of thought.

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[60] For Gunton God is the Trinity or Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and so it would not make a difference which word is used. Yet here we are encouraged for the sake of discussion to distinguish between "God" as a general term and "the Trinity" as referring to the being that can only be designated by that name.
[61] Or, as a single object, 'that which is separated in person but at the same time united in substance.'
[62] *Ep*. 38.5.
[63] Ibid.

The first level is indicated by the author's concern that some people do not distinguish between *ousia* and *hypostasis*, rather treating them as synonymous.[64] For them, therefore, it does not make a difference which term is used for explicating the Trinity, with the result that some of those who accept "one *ousia*" are pleased to speak also of "one *hypostasis*" while those who accept "three *hypostaseis*" are bound to assert the same number of *ousia*, "three *ousie*." It is under this problematic circumstance that the author has composed the letter in order to help his brother (or the reader) avoid falling into a similar error.[65]

Thus, the author's differentiation of *ousia* and *hypostasis* creates a second level on which one might think of the Trinity. As are found in the second section of the letter, *ousia* is to do with *hypostasis* just as the common is to do with the particular. According to the given explanation, some nouns, like *man*, have a more general sense extending to all particulars under the same name, while other nouns, like *Paul*, have circumscribed denotation, indicating no extension to what is common to those of the same genus or species but a specification of the particular man who is known by that name. Likewise, with the doctrine of the Trinity, though only by analogy, what is common in the Trinity (such as "uncreated" and "incomprehensible") is referred to the *ousia* and what is specific to the *hypostasis*.[66] Considered from the perspective of this distinction (i.e., *hypostasis* indicating that which is specifically spoken of and *ousia* that which is generally spoken of), it would be no longer viable to speak of the Father, the Son and the Spirit as "one hypostasis" or "three essences," just as it is not allowable to speak of Paul, Silvanus and Timothy as "one *hypostasis*" or "three *ousie*." They are three in *hypostasis* and one in *ousia*.

If we need the first level for that in which *ousia* is synonymous with *hypostasis*, and the second for that in which *ousia* is distinguished from *hypostasis*, for referring to different aspects of being, a third level of thought is called for as the Cappadocian author continues to use the concept of *ousia* for explaining an aspect of being to which the distinction of *ousia* and *hypostasis* in terms of the common and the particular can be no longer of much service. In section 3, as an example of illustration of his point, the author speaks of "a certain man called Job," not as Job along with Eliphaz, Bildad and

[64] 'Athanasius lets us clearly see that for him—and for his contemporaries—ousia and hypostasis mean exactly the same thing.' Zizioulas, *Being*, 87, with reference to PG 26: 1036.
[65] *Ep*. 38.1.
[66] *Ep*. 38.2.

Zophar under the generic term *man*, as in the first example in Section 2, but as the one whose identity is marked out from the "common" definition of man by "particular" notes of identity such as name, dwelling place, character, possessions and family members. All these elements, general in themselves and applicable to any man, are combined in a specific way to create a certain man Job.[67] The identification of Job in this manner involves a thought move from the common ("man") through the particulars to the identification of the general ("Job"). Now, by applying this,[68] the author arrives at an understanding of the Trinity, rather than God, whose being (still, *ousia*) is constituted by the three hypostases in the community of *ousia*. This interpretation is not an attempt to reduce *ousia* to *hypostasis* or break down the balance it makes with *hypostasis*, but a result of following the flow of the discourse moving from the account of the Trinity by the distinction between *ousia* and *hypostasis* to something explainable only by hypostasis—the kind of flow the Cappadocian author finds in the book of Job.[69] In Section 5, when the *ousia* of the Trinity is finally affirmed as referring to the common in comparison to the *hypostasis*, it is now in the changed context that is facilitated by the example of Job, with the focus having been on the hypostases and the overriding analogy being that of the conjoined and the separated.[70]

Comprehended from this perspective of the three levels of thought, the use of the concept of *ousia* for two or three different things in *Ep*. 38 is no longer a problem but, rather, turns out to be constituting a dynamic approach to the being of God as is understood by the Cappadocian author. If, therefore, *Ep*. 38 is going to be used for presenting an account of the Cappadocian concept of *ousia* only in the generic or specific sense it requires an unacceptable condition that takes only one part of the letter into consideration while ignoring the rest of it which contains changes in focus and in

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[67] 'When purposing to narrate the events of his life, Job first mentions the common, and says "a man;" then he straightway particularizes by adding "a certain." As to the description of the essence, he is silent, but by means of particular notes of identity, mentioning the place and points of character, and such external qualifications as would individualize, and separate from the common and general idea, he specifies the "certain man," in such a way that from name, place, mental qualities, and outside circumstances, the description of the man whose life is being narrated is made in all particulars perfectly clear' (*Ep*. 38.3).

[68] 'Transfer, then, to the divine dogmas the same standard of difference which you recognise in the case both of essence and of hypostasis in human affairs, and you will not go wrong.'

[69] 'As to the description of the essence, as having no bearing on the scope of his work, he is silent … If he had been giving an account of the essence, there would not in his explanation of the nature have been any mention of these matters [name, place, mental qualities, and outside circumstances].'

[70] Section 5, speaking of 'the essence emanating the many-coloured radiance,' ends this: 'Since then our discussion has included both what is common and what is distinction in the Holy Trinity, the common is to be understood as referring to the essence; the hypostasis on the other hand is the several distinctive sign.'

the supporting analogy of the point being made.

4.4. Conclusion

The factors discussed thus far indicate that *Ep*. 38 gives more support to Gunton's use of *ousia* considered by and with *hypostasis* than Fermer's use of *ousia* considered only before or regardless of *hypostasis*. Among them are the following six: (1) the distinction between *ousia* and *hypostasis* by the analogy of the common and the particular, and its partial service in the early part of the letter; (2) the eclipse of the account of *ousia* for the sake of enquiring into *hypostasis*; (3) the arrival of the analogy of the conjoined (*ousia*) and the distinct (*hypostasis*), and the examples of Job, the chain and the rainbow; (4) the use of the word *koinonia* itself in the context in which focus is on the account of the Trinity by *hypostasis* and the second analogy; (5) the concept of *koinonia* more directly linked to *hypostasis* than to *ousia*, yet neither fastened to the realm of *hypostasis* nor separated from the realm of *ousia*; and (6) the constant move of the account towards an appropriate expression of the same subject (the Trinity), reaching its final point with the notion of "a certain strange and paradoxical united distinction and separated conjunction." These are factors that we have identified in the Cappadocian letter, which are better reflected in Gunton's work than Fermer's.

It is interesting that Gunton's use of *ousia* has been a problem mainly for those like Fermer who approach with a view of *ousia* to which only general attributes of divine nature can be predicated. Yet we are now in a position to be able to say that such a concept of *ousia* does not fully reflect the actual use of the term in the source used for the argument. In fact, as we saw, *ousia* is not only used in connection with the common nature that is predicable by general features of divine nature but also in consideration of the distinct persons together. What we have also noticed is that the two ways of *ousia* being used in *Ep*. 38 are neither contradictory nor loosely put together but, rather, have an order in which the *ousia* in the first sense (Godhead) provides a stage for a focused consideration of the hypostases (Father, Son and Spirit) to come up with the *ousia* in the second sense (a communion of the three persons), something similar to what we have identified in the development of Gunton's concept of substance.[71]

The problem remains regarding Gunton's proposal of the conception of the *ousia* of God as a communion of persons because one definite sense in which *ousia* is used in *Ep*.

[71] §§3.1.5.c and 3.3.

38 certainly concerns the common contrasted with the particular. Yet it should be noted that it is not an issue that can be treated well in such a way as suggested by Fermer and followed by Nausner, namely by approaching it with a concept of *ousia* whose meaning is limited to the nature held in common by all particulars under the same name. The reasons are several, including the following three: (1) that Gunton's use of the *communion* passage is not wholly mistaken; (2) that Fermer's use of *Ep*. 38 against Gunton reflects more his own view of the matter than what is actually said by Gunton; and (3) that the concept of *ousia* (and so substance) advocated by the critics has problematic implications for theology and the doctrine of the Trinity: for the former, all deities worshipped in the world are thus of one Godhead, just as all humans are of one humanity;[72] and, for the latter, the incarnation and economy or God's involvement in the world through the Son and the Spirit has little bearings upon how we speak of the being of God and the created being.[73]

A better solution lies in the recognition that even the concept of *ousia* used in *Ep*. 38 has a certain degree of ambiguity similar to what we have identified in Gunton. Firstly, to repeat, *ousia* is used in line with the example of "man," as referring to the common vis-à-vis the particular (*hypostasis*), "Paul" or "Timothy." The expected thought movement here is from the common to the particular, with the result of a conception of Paul or Timothy as a particular case of the species to which they commonly belong. In respect to the common, Paul and Timothy are one and the same and there is no variation between them. Secondly, however, *ousia* is also used in line with the example of "Job" for which both the common (*ousia*) and the particular (*hypostasis*) are considered, now the common for, say, Job as Job, and the particular for what make up the being called thus. The expected progression in thought here is from the common (man) through the particular (all particular characteristics) to the general (Job), not back to the common (man), if we distinguish the latter two. We now have sufficient ground to think of them as parts of a dynamic movement from one account of the Trinity by the analogy of common and particular to another by the analogy of joined and distinguished. Otherwise, we would have to think of the existence of two "conflicting" concepts of *ousia*, which is very unlikely. Consequently, we are put in a similar situation to that in which previously

[72] This may sound true in theory, especially within a monotheistic framework, paradoxically leading to polytheism. As far as theology is concerned, however, it is a far cry from reality. Cf. Peter Cotterell, *One God: The Deity Revealed In Jesus*, Milton Keynes: Authentic Media, 2006.
[73] The concern that Gunton had, with little exaggeration, throughout his authorship. 'In sum,' says Gunton, 'God's being is known in and through his action, his triune act' (*AB* 113).

were we when examining the concept of *ousia* in Gunton.[74] There an attempt was made to maintain the two different meanings of *ousia* identified in Gunton by understanding one in terms of "given-ness" (metaphysical form) and the other of "constituted-ness" (ontological shape). What we are now encouraged to do with the two concepts of *ousia* identified in *Ep*. 38 is similar to that, namely to understand the first *ousia* (in the analogy of the common and the particular) as referring to Godhead, the common nature of Father, Son and Spirit, and the second *ousia* (in the analogy of the related and distinguished) as referring to the divine aspect that is known only through the *hypostaseis* and their relations to each other and is non-existent without them.[75]

[74] §3.1.5.

[75] The order is only for the sake of discussion because, ontologically speaking, the result of the movement in the opposite direction would or should be the same. 'No sooner do I conceive of the One than I am illuminated by the splendor of the Three; no sooner do I distinguish them than I am carried back to the One' (Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration*, 40.41., as cited in *OTM* 149).

Chapter 5 Relationality, Particularity and Spatiality

In the previous discussions, we observed some ambiguities regarding Gunton's concept of *ousia* (or substance), which led to an attempt to explain them in terms of a double use of the concept, especially in response to some misunderstandings. We also saw that such interpretations of his conceptual work as reducing the concept of *ousia* or breaking the balance between the realm of *ousia* and that of *hypostasis* (and *koinonia*) are not supported by a careful examination of Gunton's work which, rather, suggests that the concept of *ousia* advocated by the critics is also present in Gunton's work, though not playing in the foreground of his discussion. We were then led to think of a move in Gunton's thought from the *ousia* through the *hypostasis* to the *koinonia* for an understanding of his concept of *ousia* conceived as a *koinonia* by looking at the three hypostases and their relations to each other. A similar move has been revealed by our examination of the Cappadocian work used by both Gunton and his critic. The question for this chapter is what to do with this ambiguity concerning Gunton's use of the concept of *ousia*. One option is to leave it as it is left by Gunton. The problem with this is that Gunton is likely to continue to be misunderstood as we have already seen.[1] A more positive option would be to ascertain a way in which Gunton's conceptuality can be better understood, as the present study aims. An opening step towards the goal can be made by looking at Gunton's transcendental enquiry in more detail than previously done in this study, which will lead us to two destinations: identification of a problem that appears to be closely related to the problem of using perichoresis or relationality for two different purposes; and consideration of the concept of space as having an answer to the problem, that is, to have spatiality for what he appears to have intended relationality as his third relationality. Due to the subject matter being concentrated in *the One, the Three and the Many*, the discussion here will be focused on Gunton's transcendental project as it appears in that work.

5.1. Transcendentality

Gunton's transcendental project has a concern for the objective truth of universal application, especially for a better way of living in the world and with one another than the modern way.[2] His analysis is that several problems of the modern culture derive

[1] Fermer's challenge to Gunton's concept of *ousia* is simply given by Sverker, *Constructivism*, 125 n.45 and 127 n.50, as if it is a valid qualification of Gunton's ontology.
[2] Cf. *OTM* chs.2–3.

from 'the loss of the concept of truth and, with it, all the connotations of objectivity and universality that it once had for much of Western intellectual history.'[3] In his view, while the modern revolt against the past has a justification in exposing its weaknesses,[4] the outcome is so catastrophic[5] that Gunton is led to look at modernity in general in terms of "realm of paradoxes"[6] and "coincidence of opposites."[7] He locates the epicentre of the problem in what he calls 'displacement,'[8] meaning thereby that when God is excluded something else, such as human reason, will or agency eventually takes the place of God as 'the focus of the unity and meaning of being,'[9] or the place of the world as 'the seat of rationality and meaning.'[10] That is, when God is displaced as the focus of the unity of things, functions traditionally attributed to God do not disappear but are 'exercised by some other source of unity.'[11] Thus, for Gunton, exclusion of God is not a solution but, rather, the cause of much of the predicament of the human condition in the modern era.[12] What he seeks in such a situation is transcendentals, namely, 'ways to rehabilitate or reinvigorate the concept of truth, without, however, ignoring the genuine weaknesses of that against which much modern thought has reacted.'[13]

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[3] *OTM* 129. Brad Green draws on Williams, *Revelation*, 172, to suggest that "because Gunton's analysis of the nature and origin of modernity is somewhat flawed, likewise Gunton's suggestions for what provides healing in the light of modernity indeed may be flawed' ('Gunton,' 171). There are two flaws considered by Green: 'the tendency to construe our modern quandary mainly in terms of improper theological construals or constructs (particularly certain intellectual missteps or errors)' and 'the tendency to see our alienation as flowing from rather than contributing to the various intellectual errors and missteps that developed in the modern era' (ibid). Against these problems, Green suggests that 'more attention should be given to the cognitive and noetic effects of human sinfulness' (ibid). There are many places in Gunton that can be taken to dispute the validity of this argument. One is this: 'If the settlement which created Christendom introduced contradictions, we have the Enlightenment to thank for their revelation. Modernism is the ideology which lives from the exposure of those contradictions. Its tragedy, and ours, is that it lives from little else: indeed, its contradictions are deeper and more deadly than those of Christendom, largely because of its demonic human self-confidence and lack of a doctrine of sin' (*AA* 176). From *OTM*, 'That orientation of being [towards its perfection by the free creativity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit] is, of course, distorted and delayed by sin and evil, and returns to its directedness only through the incarnation and the redeeming agency of the Spirit' (166).

[4] *OTM* 5, 38.

[5] Such as the alienation of culture from nature (14f), divinization of the finite (91), epistemological and moral relativism (106f).

[6] See *OTM* 13, 33, 76, 99f and 106f.

[7] See *OTM* 18, 34 and 37.

[8] As discussed in *OTM* 23–34. Cf. also, 72, 87, 89f, 114, 123, 141f, 145 n.24, 147f, 152, 156.

[9] *OTM* 28. Cf. also, 71f and 89.

[10] Ibid.

[11] *OTM* 31.

[12] Cf. *OTM* 71–3; *PTT* ch.9.

[13] *OTM* 129. The weaknesses of the past that Gunton think are revealed in modernity include a unitary concept of God (24, 38f), development of a doctrine of creation with the aid of Greek philosophy (54), Parmenidean tendency to elevate the one over the many (26, 33f), tendency to stress salvation to the neglect of creation (55, 159), and tendency towards underlying principles (46f, 49, 200).

Further light can be thrown on the meaning of Gunton's transcendentals from a perspective knowing the problems of foundationalism and non-foundationalism identified by Gunton.[14] Firstly, regarding foundationalism, the problem is not the search for foundations so much as the forms the quest has taken thus far.[15] Failure to find a particular kind of certainty does not necessarily mean failure to discover truth at all. In addition, to equate the two is a failure to distinguish between 'foundationalism' and 'foundation.'[16] Secondly, whilst anti-foundationalism is not a way forward, even for securing particularity, its voice needs to be understood as 'the voice of a siren'[17] or 'a reaction to the failure of the discovery of certainties.'[18] Gunton is aware of the problem faced by those who entirely reject the need for foundations—they either yield to 'some form of subjectivism ("I have my story, and you have yours")' or operate 'an implicit and not always acknowledged form of foundationalism.'[19] Thirdly, the search becomes, therefore, a quest for what Gunton calls 'non-foundationalist foundations,'[20] which is not simply an expression of belief in some middle way so much as Gunton's attempt to maintain moments of truth in both foundationalist and non-foundationalist contentions for a reasoned approach to truth in which particularity and universality, unity and plurality, each have their place.[21]

Gunton has further qualifications for his pursuit of non-foundational foundations in terms of transcendentals. Firstly, his transcendentals are 'those notions which we may suppose embody "the necessary notes of being," in the pre-Kantian sense of notions which give some way of conceiving what reality truly is, everywhere and always.'[22] Truth, here, is not the kind assumed by the foundationalist mind in the sense of absolute certainty, nor the type of truth only applicable to a particular realm as preferred by the

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[14] *OTM*, 132–4. On foundationalism see, also, Colin E. Gunton, 'The Trinity, Natural Theology, and a Theology of Nature,' in K. J. Vanhoozer (ed.), *The Trinity in A Pluralistic Age: Theological Essays on Culture and Religion*, Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1997, 88–92; idem, '"No other foundation"? Revelation and the Theology of Nature' in *BTR* 48–52. The former essay is the later version of the latter.
[15] *OTM* 135. Cf. Gunton, 'Trinity,' 91. The situation is understood in a similar way by Daniel W. Hardy saying, 'What is important here is to recognise that a failure at the pragmatic level does not falsify at the transcendental level; it only shows that the particular interpretation of the transcendental level has failed' ('Created and Redeemed Sociality,' in Colin E. Gunton and D. W. Hardy (eds), *On Being the Church: Essays on the Christian Community*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989, 31).
[16] Ibid. Gunton considers this confusion to be at the root of the appeal in recent theology to narrative, for example in Ronald Thiemann, *Revelation and theology: The Gospel as Narrated Promise*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985.
[17] *OTM* 134.
[18] *OTM* 135.
[19] *OTM* 135 n.6.
[20] *OTM* 134.
[21] Ibid. Cf. also, 142.
[22] *OTM* 136, with reference to Hardy, op. cit., 25.

anti-foundationalist position, but 'a truth which is in its own way both particular and universal, both subjective and objective, while acknowledged to be the work of fallible human minds.'[23] Secondly, Gunton's transcendentals are grounded in the fact that 'God is creator and the world is creation,'[24] or 'God created the world in such a way that it bears the marks of its maker.'[25] This follows his denial of transcendentals as 'the forms through which being displays itself,' for the reason that 'that might suggest a priority of "being" over God.'[26] Imposing *a priori* philosophical categories on the being of God, in Gunton's view, is responsible for the failure of the old quest, and he wants to avoid the traditional error. For him, rather, the being of God is the source of transcendentals, though not any God but the God revealed in Christ through the Spirit. Thirdly, by transcendentals Gunton means 'fallibilist' foundations, in due recognition of their quest as that 'engaged in by fallible, finite and fallen human beings.'[27] This is, however, not to assume that finite human beings cannot find moments of universal truth. What it denotes, rather, is that Gunton seeks a proper basis, now in awareness of its fallibility, on which to establish human rationality.[28]

Gunton further qualifies his programme as 'a trinitarian analogy of being and becoming' by considering Aquinas' and Barth's programmes.[29] His programme is like Barth's in taking the economy of creation and redemption as the locus of God's revelation of himself. However, like Aquinas' analogy of being, it aims to find ways of speaking of all beings.[30] Gunton believes that the classical programme is correct at least in orientation, though its failure lies in developing transcendentals rather independently of the doctrine of God.[31] Gunton's, therefore, is a programme that is intended to be thoroughly trinitarian, with three following stages of developing trinitarian conceptuality: (a) economic observation of the divine involvement in the world; (b)

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[23] *OTM* 131, with reference to M. Polanyi who attempts to achieve a frame of mind in which, he says, 'I may hold firmly to what I believe to be true, even though I know that it might conceivably be false' (*Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*, London: Routledge, 1962 [2nd edn], 214).
[24] *OTM* 136f.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.
[27] *OTM* 135.
[28] *BTR* 63.
[29] *OTM* 141.
[30] 'I am going to ask … and raise the question of whether the concepts developed in trinitarian theology enable us not only to conceive the reality of God, but also have transcendental possibilities, and so enable us to come to terms with the fundamental shape of being' (*PTT*, 140f).
[31] Gunton draws on the analysis of the problem by M. Buckley, *At the Origins of Modern Atheism*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987, 55, and Norman Kretzmann, 'Trinity and Transcendentals,' in R. J. Feenstra and C. Plantinga (eds), *Trinity, Incarnation and Atonement: Philosophical and Theological Essays*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989, 87.

theological reflection upon its implications for understanding the eternal being of God; and (c) transcendental exploration of the concepts emerging from the interaction of the mind with the being of the triune God for understanding the being of the world and the human being.

Gunton is aware of the problem of any programme of analogy becoming 'a dialectic of time and timelessness in which the reality of life in time is evaded or negated by a flight to the eternal.'[32] Thus, referring to Sabina Lovibond's transcendental parochialism,[33] he qualifies his transcendentals as the 'concepts which are not absolutely transcendental in the platonic sense but which in some way or other belong in our embodiedness in the world.'[34] Yet Gunton's transcendentals are differentiated as "open," rather than "parochial," in the sense that what he looks for are 'the concepts which succeed in representing the universal marks of being and becoming with their clarity and certainty derived from appealing to ordinary language,'[35] and whose value should be found in their 'suggestiveness and potentiality for being deepened and enriched, during the continuing process of thought, from a wide range of sources in human life and culture.'[36] In other words, the type of transcendentals Gunton seeks should be concepts that are sufficiently profound, inexhaustible and dynamic to enable us not only to find a place for both unity and plurality,[37] and also to transcend the absolute opposition of, for instance, objectivism and subjectivism.[38]

Something of what he looks for does Gunton find in Samuel Coleridge's notion of *idea*, with the Trinity being 'the primary Idea, out of which all ideas are evolved.'[39] Gunton is drawn to Coleridgean ideas, firstly, because they are not meant to be timeless abstractions or the particular mental data of empirical experience or the innate ideas of the rational tradition of the kind succumbing to Locke's critique; rather, they are concerned with common ways in which the mind interacts with reality rather than with

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[32] *OTM* 143.
[33] Sabina Lovibond, *Realism and Imagination in Ethics*, Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1983, 210f, understood by Gunton as a form of 'renunciation of the … impulse to escape the conceptual scheme to which as creatures … we are transcendentally related,' and by Sami Pihlström as 'a refusal to attempt to transcend "the human perspective"' (*Pragmatic Moral Realism: A Transcendental Defence*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005, 38).
[34] Lovibond, *Realism*, 210f.
[35] *OTM* 142f and *PTT*, 139f.
[36] *OTM* 142f.
[37] *OTM* 142.
[38] *OTM* 145f.
[39] Kathleen Coburn and Merton Christensen (eds), *The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Volume 4, 1819–1826*, London: Routledge, 1990, 5294, as quoted by Gunton in *OTM* 144.

fixed or static concepts. Secondly, whilst they may appear vague and woolly, this is due to their profound and dynamic nature that gives rise to possibilities for deeper involvement in the truth of things. Thirdly, these ideas are mediatory in the sense that other concepts are generated by the mind interacting with them.[40] Gunton's transcendentals, in other words, are developed through the interaction of the mind interact with the idea of ideas, the Trinity.[41]

What Gunton's transcendental project seeks to achieve is similar to what Václav Havel calls 'a kind of universal system of coordinates,'[42] something both think modern people have lost with the displacement of God.[43] When Gunton speaks of the reason why we need such a system of coordinates, he also speaks of his transcendental conceptuality: 'We need coordinates if we are to know who we are and what our world is—a perspective from which to view and assess our various interests and actions.'[44] The question is, 'Can we again find transcendent coordinates which will enable us to find our place in and way around the world? In sum, does a development of trinitarian transcendentals enable us to contribute to a discussion of the nature of created reality?'[45] Of note here is the fact that it is a contribution that Gunton desires, not a complete answer, though with an expectation that the contribution will open up new lines of thought and practice for matters of truth, relationality, particularity and temporality.

Craig Bartholomew appears to represent many in expressing a caution about Gunton's transcendental conceptuality in the immediate context of its publication.[46] He is unconvinced by Gunton's three transcendentals, especially because of the danger that 'they become abstract and speculative.'[47] While such a caution needs to be heeded, Gunton's strong awareness of the danger of abstraction and speculation also needs to be noted,[48] because it would not make a good point to apply the charge of abstraction to the

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[40] *OTM* 145.
[41] This is what Gunton does in chaps. 6, 7 and 8 of *The One, the Three and the Many*. For an explicit remark on this matter, see, for example, *OTM* 154 or *PTT* 139.
[42] Václav Havel, *Open Letters: Selected Prose 1965–1990*, ed. Paul Wilson, London: Faber and Faber, 1991, 94f.
[43] *OTM* 71.
[44] Ibid. See also *OTM* 156, 161 and 166.
[45] *OTM* 152.
[46] Craig Bartholomew, 'The Healing of Modernity: A Trinitarian Remedy?' *European Journal of Theology* 6, 1997 (2), 111–30.
[47] Bartholomew, 'Healing,' 128f. Cf. also, Kilby, 'Perichoresis,' 443; Nausner, 'Failure,' 417 and 420.
[48] See, *OTM* 16, 44, 49, 52, 54, 85, 90–3, 117, 143, 150, 159, 179, 191–4. Cf. also *YT* 123, 136f; *PTT* xix–xxi. 'The point of the development is not simply … to generate concepts, however interesting, which will solve abstract problems about transcendental categories; rather the aim is to use them to throw light on those areas of human being in the world—intellectual, moral and aesthetic' (*OTM* 150).

one who knows that abstraction is helpful in some cases without first engaging with him on that. For example, speaking of the doctrine of perichoresis, Gunton says that 'The most abstract and speculative appearing doctrines have in fact the opposite function: they keep language about God down to earth.'[49] Bartholomew reveals what he means by abstraction and speculation in his suggestion of anchoring transcendentals rather in 'a biblical understanding of creation order.'[50] This suggestion, applied to Gunton, would beg the question: which biblical understanding of creation order is to be used? In other words, by what criteria is one proposal considered to be biblical and the other not? To pursue this question is not the point here, and yet it needs to be noted that Gunton's transcendental project is an outcome of his engagement with the contemporary world in the light of the gospel *and* the Trinity, although as a theologian he expresses such a hope that 'it will illuminate both the gospel and the modern condition, so that a continuing dialogue between them may take place.'[51]

What concerns the present study regarding Gunton's transcendentality is the apparent similarity between Gunton's first and third transcendentals and the ambiguous status of the concept of space in his work for them. Put differently, why does Gunton suggest two similar transcendentals for the relational (perichoresis *and* relationality), one for the substantial (particularity *or* substantiality) and none for the spatial? This question is comprised of three separate queries, the first about the similarity between the first and the third transcendentals, the second concerning particularity/substantiality as the second transcendental, and the third regarding the lack of a transcendental developed for the spatial. The last is introduced because it is closely related to the first question in such a way that a consideration of the latter invites a consideration of the former. Regarding particularity and substantiality as Gunton's second transcendental, there can be little debate. Admittedly, there are subtle, not unimportant, differences between them. However, in accordance with his interchangeable use of them,[52] Gunton does not propose them as separate transcendentals but two alternatives for the one transcendental. As will be shown later, Gunton's specific understanding of the notion of substance as

[49] *BB* 147. This is one of the two points Gunton makes with reference to Barth and Jüngel: first, that there is a sense that in which all concepts are abstract, like for Hartshorne; and yet, second, that 'the abstract description in fact performs the function of ensuring that we understand the reality of God in his concrete becoming' (137).
[50] Bartholomew, 'Healing,' 128f.
[51] *OTM* 1.
[52] Both 'particularity' (e.g., *OTM* 191, 223) and 'substantiality' (e.g., *OTM* 206f, 212) are used by Gunton in an interchangeable way in reference to the transcendental indicating that everyone or everything is what it uniquely is as a particular being.

referring to a particular entity or being of our experience rather than as something underlying it seems to help him to link and interchange them.[53]

5.2. Perichoresis and Relationality

Gunton suggests perichoresis and relationality as two separate transcendentals in his conceptuality, yet there appears to be little to distinguish between them, except the kind we might find between particularity and substantiality. That is, both concepts of perichoresis and relationality are engendered by Gunton from the doctrine of the Trinity;[54] both are meant for universal application;[55] and both are of the notion that everything and everyone are what they are by virtue of their relation to others.[56] Thus, insofar as source, meaning and scope are concerned, perichoresis and relationality do not appear to have a substantial difference between them that would require us to think of different aspects of being for them as there is between perichoresis (for the relational or the one) and substantiality (for the particular or the many).[57] That might justify taking Gunton as if he had suggested only two transcendentals.[58] Having said that, the fact remains that Gunton has suggested perichoresis and relationality as two separate transcendentals, the first and the third respectively in his transcendental project,[59] implying that an undifferentiated treatment of them might result in a misunderstanding of the project and that an identification of a difference between them might lead to a better understanding of Gunton's work.

The question to be raised at this point is what difference Gunton has in mind between perichoresis and relationality if not in source, meaning and scope. Put another way, what is it for which Gunton introduces "relationality" as a third transcendental when what is meant by it and the function it is meant to play are already covered by his first transcendental, perichoresis? An answer can be sought in two ways. Firstly, what Gunton seeks in his move towards the third transcendentals is something that concerns

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[53] Cf. *OTM* 194f.
[54] Regarding source, see *OTM* 169 (perichoresis) and 215, 218, 227 (relationality).
[55] As for application, see *OTM* 165f (perichoresis) and 229f (relationality).
[56] On significance, see *OTM* 163f (perichoresis) and 215–9 (relationality).
[57] We will have another occasion to look at Gunton's transcendentality in relation to the scheme of the one and the many at §6.1.3.
[58] As a matter of fact, however, critics show a tendency to treat Gunton as one who has a sole emphasis on relation (relationality, communion and perichoresis). Cf. Fermer, 'Limits,' 175–83; Nausner, 'Failure,' 415–8.
[59] As expressed in *OTM* 212, where the enumeration 'three' is mentioned, implying that relationality is a third open transcendental, and 229–30, where it is said that relationality is a (third) transcendental which allows us to say something about all creation and 'at the same time enables us to incorporate the insights gained from the discussion of the other two transcendentals, perichoresis and substantiality.'

both the one and the many, especially against the modern tendency to lurch between them, capable of obviating the failure 'to do justice to the interests of both society and person, one and many.'[60] In that respect, Gunton's first and third transcendentals are different in the sense that while perichoresis is mainly concerned with the one, as substantiality is mainly concerned with the many, relationality is mainly concerned with both the one and the many.[61] Secondly, Gunton approaches the third transcendental with the help of the concepts of sociality, community and communion, not in a narrower sense of them standing vis-à-vis individual or person but all in the sense of 'shared being'[62] or 'being in relation.'[63] Here then is a second difference between perichoresis and relationality: that while the first transcendental is mainly concerned with relation, and the second mainly with otherness, the third is mainly concerned with both relation and otherness.[64]

The point can be illustrated by looking at Gunton's transcendental project as going through a double process of questioning and answering: for questioning, from matters of (a) "truth" (culture) through (b) "creation" (world) to (c) "theology" (God); and, for answering, from matters of (c´) "theology" through (b´) "creation" and back to (a´) "truth." Gunton traces the problems of truth and meaning at stage (a), through problematic transcendentality at stage (b), back to theological problems at stage (c). Ultimately, for Gunton, an inappropriate doctrine of God is the source of a problematic account of truth.[65] For answering, then, the key to an appropriate account of being is to be derived from an adequate doctrine of God.[66] Here concepts gained properly at stage (c´) become, through transcendental exploration at stage (b´), the basis for erecting a renewed theory of truth and meaning at stage (a´).[67] This sketch of the movement of

[60] *OTM* 213.
[61] 'mainly' is repeated to be precise because both the one and the many appear in Gunton's development of the transcendentality of the three concepts.
[62] *OTM* 214.
[63] *OTM* 215.
[64] Following Gunton's terminology here, we would say "relation and ontology" or "relation and substance." See *OTM* 194. If, however, by transcendentals Gunton means to speak of different aspects of ontology, as he appears, "relation and otherness" would be in a better agreement with his work as a whole. This duality of the concept of relation in Gunton is also observed in the context of a discussion of Gunton's doctrine of creation and mediation. Cumin, 'Taste,' 74, and *Christ*, 182f.
[65] Gunton aptly makes a double-edged comment, 'We might say: the transcendent and apparently oppressive single deity is swept away only to be replaced by the demonic alternatives we have met' (*OTM* 38). Cf. also, *OTM* 84, 129.
[66] To the relevant question, Gunton answers, 'Only a concept of relationality based from the outset in God's economic involvement in the world of the many will be adequate' (*OTM* 140). Cf. also, 151, 225.
[67] Cf. *OTM* 7, 50f, 150, 201, which, put together, give a summary of the movement in a way of suggesting a theory of being, on the implications of a renewed theology of creation, which is possible on the basis of a doctrine of God whose being is relation in otherness and otherness in relation of Father, Son and Spirit.

thought in Gunton's transcendental enquiry will help us to make a further comment on Gunton's relationality, namely that while relationality in general might belong to all stages above, relationality as Gunton's third transcendental belongs to stage (a´) as an alternative to the problematic conception of relationality that belongs to stage (a). That said, things would be complicated if the same could be said of Gunton's first and second transcendentals as it appears to be the case. That is, perichoresis and substantiality as Gunton's first and second transcendentals belong to stage (a´), given in response to the problems of relation and otherness belonging to stage (a). This leads us to another way of understanding the difference between Gunton's first and third transcendentals, this time by considering the three different levels of thought in which relationality is discussed in Gunton.[68]

The first can be termed as a level of "philosophical generality" in which words and concepts are still open to various takings or conceptualisations. It is a level of thought and discussion in which, in other words, various philosophical theological concepts co-exist with each other. Gunton thinks of relationality on this general level when he states that relation is not additional, or accidental, but essential to being.[69] This view is not exclusive to Gunton but is shared with others in the presence of contrasting views that take relation as secondary to ontology or allow relation no ontological bearing.[70] The same can be said of particularity, yet not of perichoresis and substantiality as Gunton's first and second transcendentals for which we need a different level of thought that is open to particularity.

The second can be introduced as a level of "theological particularity," differentiated from the first level in the sense that it is a level of discussion in which a general concept of relationality is affirmed, supported and defined by a particular theological concept of

[68] Similarly, Bernard Nausner mentions "three levels on which Gunton's argument proceeds," which might be represented here as the levels (a) of theological conceptualisation; (b) of conceptual similarities between the divine being and the created being; and (c) of transcendental quest. 'These levels,' says Nausner, 'have to be perceived as a hermeneutical circle in which one level cannot be fully appreciated without the other two' ('Failure,' 408). If the representations are correct the reader might well consider them in comparison to the previous discussion of Gunton's transcendental project in terms of a double process going through three stages of questioning and answering and the current discussion of it in terms of three levels of thought.

[69] For Gunton's brief account of the concept of relation, see *PTT* 150–4.

[70] Cf. John Macmurray, *Persons in Relation*, London: Faber, 1967, 17 and 69; Alistair I. MaFadyen, *The Call to Personhood: A Christian Theory of the individual in Social Relationships*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, 183–5. For an account of the idea of persons in relation coming into Gunton who then traces it through Sir William Hamilton, Coleridge, Calvin, Richard of St Victor to the Cappadocians, see Schwöbel, 'Shape,' 191f.

perichoresis. The issue at stake now is not simply whether or not relation is essential to being[71] so much as *which* conception of relation and *how* to get to it.[72] This level appears in Gunton as he qualifies his relationality by distinguishing his view from an idealising account teaching that things can be known only in so far as they are related to *us* as being a realistic one where things can be understood only in relatedness to *each other* and *the whole including us*.[73] The idea of the latter is that people and things do not simply enter into relationship with others but relationships are constitutive of what they are in relation to others: 'people and things are what they distinctively are by virtue of their relations to other people and things.'[74] This notion of relationality is and can be discussed on a level of generality,[75] yet for Gunton only in the sense supported by a concept that he draws from a particular tradition of Christian theology and develops as his first transcendental, perichoresis.

Even perichoresis can be used as a term of general nature, yet not for Gunton when used in combination with relationality. Thus, for Gunton, "relational perichoresis" is not a probable way of combining the two words whereas "perichoretic relationality" and "non-perichoretic relationality" are.[76] Likewise, while "substantial particularity" and "insubstantial particularity" are used by Gunton,[77] "particular substantiality" is not, although again substantiality can also be used as a general term as much as particularity. 'Perichoretic particularity'[78] and 'substantial relationality'[79] are also possible in the same line of thought. That is, perichoresis and substantiality as the qualifying are prior to relationality and particularity as the qualified due to the specific connotations the former concepts have and the latter do not. If it is reasonable to regard relationality as equivalent to and interchangeable with perichoresis at this level it could be understood as "perichoretic relationality" in contrast to any notion of relationality in which things are not conceived perichoretically.

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[71] For the topic, cf. F. LeRon Shults, *Reforming Theological Anthropology: After the Philosophical Turn to Relationality*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003, 12–33; idem, *Reforming the Doctrine of God*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005, 5–9; and idem, *Christology and Science*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008.
[72] Cf. *PTT*, 139; *OTM* 149, 225.
[73] *OTM* 37, n.53, 194.
[74] *OTM* 70. Cf. also, 66, 169f, 191, 197f, 214.
[75] Cf. *OTM* 169f.
[76] Cf. *OTM* 169 ('non-perichoretic conception of relationality'), 170 ('perichoretic reciprocity'), 173 ('perichoretic relations').
[77] Cf. *OTM* 193 ('insubstantial' particulars) and 203 ('substantial particulars').
[78] As suggested by his transcendental notion of particularity or substantiality at *OTM* 196, 200–203, 207f.
[79] As implied by the use of 'insubstantial relationality' (*OTM* 195).

Another level of thought appears when Gunton offers relationality as his third transcendental since it is not simply a general concept of relationality open to various designations as yet, nor merely a specific concept of relationality defined through a transcendental development of the patristic concept of perichoresis, but rather a notion whose meaning is understandable only with the help of the senses developed for both the first and second transcendentals. It refers to a notion of relationality as something 'suggested by' the other two transcendentals[80] and 'incorporating' the insights gained from the discussion of them.[81] This notion of relationality appears to be most closely concerned with what Gunton seeks in his quest for 'a truly *relational* account of what it is to be'[82] and 'an account of *relationality* that gives due weight to both one and many, to both particular and universal, to both otherness and relation.'[83] It is difficult therefore to treat Gunton's third transcendental at the same level of thought at which the other two are discussed because it is a more comprehensive concept than perichoresis developed in respect to the one and substantiality in respect to the many.

There are two possibilities open to consideration within Gunton's framework. The first is to follow Gunton and take relationality as a third transcendental after the first and the second.[84] The problem with this option is that relationality as the third transcendental will in effect make the suggestion of perichoresis and substantiality as the first and second transcendentals meaningless because the third is suggested as a concept encompassing within itself the senses developed for the previous ones. The second possibility is to think that when suggesting relationality as a third transcendental Gunton simply intends the same for the first and the second as he does for the third. That is to say, to understand the first with the help of the second and the third, and the second with the help of the first and the third, just like he understands the third with the help of the first and the second. This interpretation is in fact supported by the cases in which Gunton uses the first and the second transcendentals in such a way.[85] In that case, however, the question we have faced earlier arises again, namely the point of having

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[80] *OTM* 214f.
[81] *OTM* 229f.
[82] *OTM* 6. Emphasis added. The connection between Gunton's transcendental quest and his theology of being through the doctrine of the Trinity was mentioned earlier.
[83] *OTM* 7. Emphasis added. Cf. also *OTM* 37.
[84] *OTM* 229f.
[85] Of perichoresis, for example, 'It [the world] is perichoretic in that everything in it contributes to the being of everything else, enabling everything to be what it distinctively is' (*OTM* 166) or 'A perichoresis which dissolves particulars is no longer perichoresis, being rather unrelational homogeneity' (186). Of substantiality, 'Both persons and things are *hypostatic* in the sense of being substantial particulars, and rendered such by the patterns of relations that constitute them what they distinctively are' (203).

perichoresis and relationality as two different transcendentals with the same meaning, function and scope.

These difficulties face us with a situation: either to give up the third transcendental or to dispense with the first and the second transcendentals. Neither is advisable even within Gunton's framework, considering his intention for three transcendentals with different purposes. There is, however, another way to ameliorate the conundrum, i.e., to take the problem facing us as lying in Gunton's choice of the word "perichoresis" or "relationality," rather than in what he aims to achieve by them. This could offer an alternative approach, namely, to revise the question asked previously from seeking to know why Gunton introduces relationality as the third transcendental now to why he chooses relationality when he has already introduced a similar word, perichoresis, as his first transcendental for a different purpose. For the sake of the flow of discussion, this question will be deferred for a later discussion in order now to turn to the third question of this chapter concerning Gunton's use of the concept of space.

5.3. Space in Gunton

Gunton's use of the concept of space is no less significant than that of relation, substance or otherness. As we have already seen, however, he uses the ideas of "relation" and "otherness" to develop his transcendentals but interestingly does not give "space" the same opportunity. Gunton has a very clear reason for this, as we shall see below,[86] but this particular choice is potentially responsible for creating the conundrum discussed in the previous section concerning how his transcendental enquiry ends up suggesting two similar transcendentals for relation (perichoresis and relationality) and only one for otherness (substantiality or particularity). Put more positively, as indicated in various places in the previous discussion, the concept of space has the capacity to clarify some ambiguities in Gunton's work and, as will be argued, spatiality could better serve what Gunton intends with "relationality" as his third transcendental. However, first, we focus on the concept of space as it is used by Gunton.

Gunton's use of the term "space" on various occasions and in different senses is considerable, to the extent that it would have been helpful had he provided a separate

[86] §5.4.

section on this important concept.[87] That said, this diversity does not mean that any reader will have difficulty in understanding which sense of space Gunton has in mind each time he uses the word. As he comments in a different context when talking about two senses of "creation,"[88] context will show which sense is being used. What follows is an attempt at a clarification of the concept of space used by Gunton by classifying it into the following three conceptions.

5.3.1. *World*-space

The first usage in which Gunton makes of the term "space" is in reference to the world of space and time as a whole. Space in this sense has, more or less, the same meaning as what is signified by "the world," "the created world," or "creation." Thus, Gunton speaks of: 'the material world of space and time;'[89] 'the economic divine involvement in the world of time and space;'[90] God's involvement in time and space;[91] 'incarnation of the Son in time and space;'[92] 'personal action of God in time and space;'[93] 'the presence of God to space.'[94] In this case, as the examples show, space can be used on its own, or together with time as "time and space," or together with world and time as "the world of time and space." The world referred to here is the physical world of space, time and matter in which we humans live with other living and non-living things. This is a conception of space in which "space," "time," or "space and time" can without much trouble be replaced by the term the world, the universe or the creation. We call this conception of space "*world*-space," which involves the following two senses.

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[87] A relatively long treatment of space is found in *YT* 103–35. That being the case, it needs to be noted that Gunton's use of the concept of space exceeds that of most of his contemporaries, at least more comprehensive than found in other trinitarian theologians. For example, T. F. Torrance, *Space, Time and Incarnation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969, 4f, 56–59, understands that there were two concepts of space at work in the time of early Christianity: 'relational conception of space' and 'container notion of space.' These two concepts of space serve well in elucidating his theology of incarnation, but both of them can be regarded as two contrastive ways of understanding what is designated in this work as *world*-space. J. Moltmann, *God in Creation: An ecological doctrine of creation. The Gifford Lectures 1984–1985*, London: SCM press, 1985, 140–157, has drawn out three kinds of space from his meditation on space: 'absolute space' (the essential omnipresence of God); 'the space of creation' (God's world-presence); 'relative places' (space in the created world). This scheme has its own merit and is indeed more helpful in understanding the concept of space than what we find in Gunton's writings, in a sense that Gunton has not provided such a list or clarification. Nevertheless, there is another sense that the scheme of Moltmann seems to lack a conceptual tool for what is covered by *between*-space in Gunton, which turns out to be a main point of contrast between the two theologians.

[88] *TC* 1f. The two senses of creation are creation as the act of creating and creation as the product of the act. For different senses of creation, see Hardy, op. cit., 31–3.

[89] *OTM* 97.

[90] *OTM* 84.

[91] Cf. *OTM* 164.

[92] *CC* 78.

[93] *TC* 95.

[94] Colin E. Gunton, 'Barth, The Trinity, and Human Freedom,' *Theology Today* 43, 1986 (3), 317.

The first concerns the concept of space as used in reference to the 'distinctive characteristics intrinsic to this world.'[95] Space, in this sense, is one of the 'parameters of this world,'[96] or 'functions of there being a created order.'[97] Gunton uses the term in two ways. Firstly, he puts temporality and spatiality of this world into contrast with 'the supposed timelessness and unlimitedness of the world beyond,'[98] not to bring in a two-world theory, but in the sense of the world not being continuous with God the creator.[99] Secondly, Gunton understands space as not merely interchangeable or connected with time: they are also clearly distinct. As such, time and space are not *the* parameters or functions of the created order but *two* of them. Consequently, time and space should not be mixed up by their closeness so that time is spatialized and space temporalised. They are, rather, superlative examples of co-existence and interconnectedness within creation.[100]

The second sense is in contrast to the first in that it is space in the sense of the "condition," or "context," for the world. Here it is not the world that by being created demarcates the boundaries of time and space but the other way around. Gunton illustrates this by speaking of this universe as 'limited in time and space,'[101] or 'taking shape in time and space.'[102] Gunton's intention in using the concept of space in this way has rather to do with emphasising the limitedness or finitude of this world. Among the examples showing that are Gunton's speaking of 'temporal and spatial limitedness of the creation,'[103] 'creation's finitude, its being in time and space,'[104] and human 'boundedness in time and space.'[105] Consequently, the apparent contrast between space and time as "conditions" of the world on the one hand and as "functions" of there being a world on the other does not necessarily need to be taken as pointing to a contradiction in Gunton because it is equally possible to take it as showing his understanding of time, space and the world as a dynamic of relatedness.

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[95] Zizioulas comments that the Greek term for space, διαστημα, is used in the sense of both space and time (*Communion*, 3).
[96] *OTM* 76.
[97] *TC* 143.
[98] *OTM* 76.
[99] *TC* 143.
[100] '[I]t appears to be … that there is much to be said for the doctrine that space and time are in certain respects different, however much they are equally features of one space-time universe' (*TC* 140).
[101] *OTM* 171.
[102] *TC* 143.
[103] *OTM* 167.
[104] *TC* 92.
[105] *OTM* 214.

Gunton's use of the concept of space in this first usage, then, is mainly referential, referring to the physical world, or the universe, encompassing its entirety on a large scale, with time and space demarcating it as well as being demarcated by it. In addition, *world*-space includes reference to space itself as distinct from time, which is what is implied when Gunton in his work on Christology says that 'all depends on how we conceive space.'[106] As such, this first conception of space, especially in the latter sense, is the one for which diverse meanings are suggested by scholars, and Gunton has his own contribution to make to its understanding.[107]

5.3.2. *Of*-space

The second conception of space in Gunton refers to the space that encompasses or belongs to particular things. This can be introduced by considering Gunton's account of relationality which frames the question of relationality in such a way as to aim for it as that in which due weight is given to both parties under consideration of relation. This particular framing of the question operates in almost every relation Gunton considers and has as its goal to reach what he calls 'relation-in-otherness,' or 'otherness-in-relation.'[108] Gunton's chief way of achieving that goal is to give due "space" to particulars in relation, whether any given way of thought allows the other "space" to be itself playing as the principal criterion for his enquiry into various issues on relation. The concept of space here is not the same as the one we have considered above, and so we differentiate them by designating the new one as *of*-space to signify space in the sense of either belonging to or encompassing particular things.

Examples of *of*-space abound mostly, not surprisingly, in places where Gunton deals with the matters of relation between particulars, although the contexts vary. One is in his expression of 'a concern for space in which the human can be human.'[109] Another is found in a context in which Gunton moves towards a way of holding God and the world together in their otherness in terms of the one and the many, that is, when Gunton talks of 'the forms of the one that fail to give due space to the many,'[110] arguing for giving due "space" not only to the one but also to the many. As we shall see later, his argument

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[106] *YT* 114. Cf. *CC* 78.
[107] See, especially, *YT* 103–38.
[108] According to Gunton, 'an account of relationality that gives due weight to both one and many, to both particular and universal, to both otherness and relation, is to be derived from the one place where they can satisfactorily be based, a conception of God who is both one and three, whose being consists in a relationality that derives from the otherness-in-relation of Father, Son and Spirit' (*OTM* 7).
[109] *PTT* 109. It is a concern he draws from or shares with S. T. Coleridge.
[110] *OTM* 37.

for that space would be groundless unless it were underwritten by the assumption that there *is* due space given and so belonging to the many for existence, as seen in his suggestion of a conception of providence in terms of two models: 'the Son as the giver of structure, and the Holy Spirit as the one who gives the world space to become within but not apart from that structuring,'[111] the 'space in which the creation can be properly itself.'[112] The reference to the Spirit provides an opportunity to look at another example regarding the work of the Holy Spirit in relation to the humanity of the Son: 'The Spirit is the one who mediates the action of God the Father in such a way that the life of the Son … is given space to remain authentically human.'[113] What Gunton says here can also be understood as a corrective of what he perceives to be the tendency to fail to give the being of the Spirit space to be itself in relation to the Father and the Son.[114]

It might be noticed that this second conception of space is very similar to the first, i.e., space as condition or context for the world. However, the similarities between them are marginal compared to the differences. Firstly, while the former has the context of the whole universe, the context for the latter is mainly of the particulars existing within that whole, although they could be the whole universe in relation to its creator.[115] While, secondly, the former plays mainly a referential function in Gunton, the latter's function is more regulative and hermeneutical. Thirdly, the former is relatively limited to physical and metonymical uses whereas the latter expands to metaphysical and metaphorical uses.

5.3.3. *Between*-space

The third conception of space is the space existing between particular things and people. This can be introduced by recalling what has led us to *of*-space, i.e., Gunton's concept of relationality in terms of "relation in otherness," and by coupling it with his concern for "freedom." The full significance of freedom for Gunton's theology is saved for a later discussion.[116] Let it suffice here to say that Gunton's concern for freedom introduces another key note of space into his discussion of relation. What we have seen

[111] *TC* 192.
[112] *TtT* 133.
[113] *TtT* 147. Cf. *PTT* 69.
[114] Cf. *TtT* 105–28. See also *PTT* 128–35.
[115] Cf. *TC* 143.
[116] A summary of Gunton's thought on the matter of relation and otherness can be found in, for example, *PTT* 143–5 and 201–4, though they deal with the matter from a slightly different perspective from each other.

thus far is Gunton's way of reaching the idea of relation in otherness by giving particulars in relation due space to be themselves. Put differently, the purpose of giving space is mainly to secure freedom for the other, i.e., freedom to remain other or to be itself or oneself. For there to be this kind of freedom, Gunton argues, 'there must be space.'[117] By mentioning space in this way, Gunton not only presupposes *of*-space but also, more specifically, he refers to a different kind of space, namely space existing *between* the particulars. It is by this observation that we can have a third conception of space distinct from the other two by the designation of *between*-space. While the difference of the third from the first is relatively clear, as it is similar to the difference between the first and the second, the difference between the third and the second is subtler. An explanation can be put thus: while *of*-space is like a "place" with dimensions of depth, width and height in which the particular exist, *between*-space is closer to the concept of "distance," or "distinction," that exists between the particulars.

Examples of Gunton's use of space in this third way reflect a similar use to that of *of*-space and appear mostly in discussions of the relation between particulars within a given totality in diverse contexts. One is that of 'a conception of some kind of space between the divine and the world,'[118] which, according to Gunton, involves any doctrine of creation and all theologies of transcendence.[119] Thus, contrary to the modern 'displacement of the other, transcendent deity into human subjectivity,' Gunton argues,

> If there is no space between God and the world; or, rather, no God to give things space in which to be, we lose the space between one another and between ourselves and the world of particulars without which we are not truly what we are.[120]

By "no God" Gunton appears to mean some atheistic philosophies which give no space to the divine, and by "no space between God and the world" some inadequate theologies which derive from inadequate metaphysics. In Gunton's view, for example, Hegel's philosophy, so influential on modern Christian theology, was very close to pantheism in conceiving the action of the Spirit too immanently and thereby failing 'to space God and the world in such a way that they can be understood to be distinct.'[121] In addition, Gunton traces the root of what he perceives as the modern tendency to pantheism to the Greek philosophy, especially to that of Plotinus, to whom he considers 'whether his

[117] *PTT* 129.
[118] *OTM* 36.
[119] *TC* 36; *OTM* 36.
[120] *OTM* 71.
[121] *OTM* 148.

doctrine of emanation leaves sufficient space between the two.'[122] In contrast, argues Gunton, a trinitarian theology of creation can construe the relation between God and the world in such a way as not to close 'the space between God and the created order.'[123] A similar conceptual scheme positing *between*-space continues to operate in Gunton's discussions of the doctrine of the Trinity,[124] entailing some contrast with those of other trinitarian theologians who in his view conceive the Father, the Son and the Spirit too closely.[125] As other examples Gunton also speaks of the space between: human 'persons;'[126] 'ourselves and the world of particulars without which we are not truly what we are;'[127] 'Christian theology and the Bible;'[128] and 'the words of Genesis and their theological interpretation.'[129]

What is reflected in these examples of *between*-space is Gunton's concern for freedom and otherness which lies at the heart of his theology of relation. As Gunton puts it, 'the personal otherness, the self-sufficiency, of God is the basis on which freedom depends because it is the ground for the otherness of the human in relation to God.'[130] It is in order that this may occur that Gunton draws on the concept of space, arguing for "space" in order that the created world may be free to be itself in relation to God,[131] "personal space" that allows humans to be free in relation to the divine[132] and to one another,[133] and "greater space" between the persons of the Trinity than he finds in some others' works.[134]

Let us close this section by considering a dynamic of space with regard to the three conceptions delineated above. Firstly, space is given (*world*-space), in its entirety, to those particulars that come into it and live in it, by the one who is its maker, giver and benefactor, both in conjunction with and distinct from time. Secondly, into this givne

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[122] *TC* 36, 65.
[123] *TtT* 149f.
[124] *IA* 101–106; *PTT* 133f; *TtT* 104.
[125] For example, Robert W. Jenson, 'The Triune God' in C. E. Braaten and R. W. Jenson (eds), *Christian Dogmatics* volume I, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984, 83–191; LaCugna, *God*, 210–32; Ted Peters, *God as Trinity: Relationality and Temporality in Divine Life*, Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/ John Knox Press, 1993, 145f.
[126] *OTM* 39.
[127] *OTM* 71.
[128] *TC* 42.
[129] *TC* 111.
[130] *PTT* 135.
[131] Cf. *PTT* 201–4; *TC* 99–102 and 178–82.
[132] Cf. *PTT* 107–9; *OTM* 39, 71.
[133] Cf. *PTT* 114, 123 n.7.
[134] See Gunton's discussion of R. Jenson's theology in *PTT* 128–35.

space do particulars enter, thereby creating space for them to exist within (*of*-spaces). Finally, as particulars come into the scene one after the other, simultaneously or over a long period of time, a new space is created between them (*between*-spaces). There is a dynamic interrelation between these three kinds of space in the sense that they both affect and are affected by each other. On the one hand, *world*-space provides space to be filled in by particulars which are the determinants for the emergence of *of*-spaces and *between*-spaces.[135] On the other hand, the general shape of *world*-space is affected by the appearance, formation and disappearance of both particulars and spaces in and between which they exist. *World*-space would remain empty were it not for particulars, let alone no *of*- or *between*-spaces, and would be shapeless without their activities and relations to each other. Put more abstractly, the given whole provides a condition for the parts and is formed into a shape by them (what they are, how they relate to each other, what they do separately and together, etc.).

There is a conceptual parallel between what is being said here—the duality of the whole (conditioning and formed) and the significance of the particular for the shape of the whole—and what we met in a previous discussion of the Cappadocian concepts of *ousia* in two senses in relation to *hypostasis*: the first as in terms of "given-ness" and the second of "constituted-ness."[136] The point is not to suggest an application of the former to the latter but only to show how a careful consideration of the concept of space used by Gunton can help us to have a clearer picture of his work. The question is whether Gunton's use of the word "space" is not considerable enough to invite a transcendental development of "spatiality."

5.4. Spatiality

We begin a spatial transcendentality by asking why Gunton did not pursue spatiality in his transcendental enquiry despite his extensive use of it for his ontological explorations. One reason is found in this: 'to give transcendental status to that which is simply part of the created order is to misplace the object of worship, and so to misconstrue the kind of

[135] For example, if the universe has been expanding as scientists observe through the Hubble Space Telescope, then it would be the case that *world*-space affects all things within it on a grand scale. Cf. http://hubblesite.org/hubble_discoveries/breakthroughs/cosmology. That said, however, it is rather surprising that the solar system does not appear to have been affected by that alleged expansion over the last 6,000 years. This may be because this amount of years is less than 0.06 second in a macrocosmic time scale or because the universe expands in such a way that does not affect the order of the solar system.
[136] §3.1.5.c.

being that it is.'[137] This is, for Gunton, a theological lesson regarding what he perceives as the failure to achieve freedom for the many in modernity by displacing God. For us it is the decision indicated previously as responsible for Gunton's transcendental enquiry ending up in the questionable way discussed thus far. By reaching this very decision, and abiding by it, Gunton deselects a concept that could have offered a better service for his third transcendental than relationality, let alone his ontology in general. The following three considerations are taken as an invitation to reconsider the decision.

Firstly, it is questionable whether "being part of the created order"[138] can be a sufficient reason for not giving space transcendental status at all, considering that it is only one sense of space among those used by Gunton, as we saw, and that the scope of his use of space is not much different from that of substance, relation or otherness, as can be seen in various places.[139] This can be discussed over the following passage:

> Because God is involved economically in time and space, he cannot be conceived *merely* timeless and non-spatial. Perichoresis implies an ordered but free interrelational self-formation: God is not simply shapeless, a negatively conceived monad, but eternal interpersonal life. There is thus a richness and space in the divine life, in itself and as turning outwards in the creation of the dynamic universe that is relational order in space and time.[140]

In this passage,[141] the word "space" occurs three times. In the first and third cases, space is metonymically used, along with the word "time," for referring to the created world in which humans live and God is involved economically. To use our terms, space in both cases is that of *world*-space referring to the physical world, though the latter one in the specified sense of the condition of the world. Space in the second case, however, does not have the same reference. Nor does it appear to be used in any other sense of the three conceptions discussed in the previous section.[142] In any case, our focus now is not its sense so much as the following observations. Firstly, despite Gunton's caution against giving space transcendental status he continues to use space for saying

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[137] *OTM* 156.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Cf. *PTT* 107–9 and 201–3. Gunton acknowledges that he owes the concept of space used in the first context to D. W. Hardy, 'Coleridge on the Trinity,' *Anglican Theological Review* 69, 1988, 145–55.
[140] *OTM* 164. Gunton's emphasis.
[141] In this passage Gunton speaks in such a way that in which it is difficult to know whether he is speaking for himself, simply explicating Barth's thought, or his words are created in the words of Barth. In any case, the first two stages of the process of Gunton's transcendental development mentioned previously are present: economic observation of the divine involvement in the world; and theological reflection on the implications of the economy for an understanding of the eternal being of God.
[142] It might be taken either as an example of *world*-space, extended to the metaphorical use to include the divine realm, or an example of *of*-space, applied to the being of God.

something of the life of God, though in speaking of the thought movement in Barth.[143] This is significant for our enquiry because, for Gunton, God is the source of transcendentality,[144] implying that this space can be considered as a candidate for developing spatial transcendentality within his own framework, as he does with relationality and particularity. It is interesting, secondly, that divine spatiality is mentioned as an implication of the perichoretic life of God.[145] This interesting point is that the reader wonder whether Gunton does not use the concept of perichoresis, at least in this passage, in a closer sense to spatiality than to relationality. The third observation is that it is in the context of developing a transcendentality of perichoresis that Gunton speaks of divine spatiality. This raises a question as to why then only perichoresis is to be given the transcendental status if divine spatiality is also an implication of God's involvement in the world. Gunton's reason is already mentioned, but it is now weakened by these observations and questions.[146] Having said that, Gunton's cautious attitude towards space, expressed at the beginning of his transcendental quest, persists until the end of the quest, leading to a set of transcendental concepts with no transcendental related to space and yet two similar transcendentals related to relation: *perichoresis*, *substantiality* or *particularity*, and *relationality*.[147]

Let us turn to the question of why Gunton has come to suggest "relationality" as his third transcendental despite its similarity with perichoresis in meaning, function and scope. There are two phases in Gunton's exploration of his third transcendental that might help to answer the question if given more attention than is normally done. Firstly, as we saw, Gunton's quest for a third transcendental concept begins with an introduction of the concept of "sociality,"[148] and is mostly covered with expositions of

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[143] As Gunton finds in Barth, *Dogmatics* II.1., 468–90 (on spatiality and omnipresence) and 608–40 (on eternity). See also, Gunton, 'Transcendence, Metaphor, and the Knowability of God,' *Journal of Theological Studies* 31, 1980, 514f; Gunton, 'Barth,' 316–9.

[144] For Gunton's talk of God, the triune God, as the source of his transcendentality, See *OTM* 145, 167, 168, 177 and 225.

[145] For divine spatiality in Barth see *Dogmatics* II.1., 461–90. In particular, 467f ('divine spatiality'); 470–6 ('general presence of God in His creation'); 476–8 ('special presence of God in His creation'); 483f ('God's presence in His Word').

[146] For further examples of Gunton's use of space for describing the being of God, see *PTT* 110, 128, 134 and 202. According to them, God is not only said to *have* space but also to *be* space. To quote one example, 'The personal otherness, the self-sufficiency, of God is the basis on which freedom depends because it is the ground for the otherness of the human in relation to God. That freedom derives from the gift in both creation and redemption of the God who has and is personal space and so can be the creator of such space' (135).

[147] *OTM*, 163–73 (*perichoresis*); 188–209 (*substantiality*); 212 (summary of both); 219–31 (*relationality*); 229–30 (summary of the three).

[148] 'The trinitarian conception suggested by the two transcendentals—perichoresis and substantiality—is that of sociality' (*OTM* 214).

the ideas of sociality and communion. For Gunton, however, these two concepts are suitable only for consideration of *personal* beings. As such, secondly, he suggests "relationality" as a transcendental for what he has considered and explained mostly in terms of sociality and communion. In other words, the third transcendental is meant to indicate the same aspect of ontology as he wants to indicate by "sociality" and "communion," with the sole difference being in the scope of application. The implication is that we need to understand Gunton's third transcendental in a broader sense than that of relationality distinguished from particularity. As they stand, however, it would be difficult to defend it against any misapprehension and misappropriation, even if he meant it otherwise.[149]

For anyone, therefore, who wishes to criticise Gunton's transcendental concepts or appropriate them in a way devoid of the problem of having two similar terms for different purposes, the following three options are open to consideration regarding the third transcendental developed in reference to the ontological aspect Gunton considers in terms of a communion of particulars in relation to each other: (1) take "relationality" as suggested by Gunton; (2) turn to "sociality" or "communion" by ignoring the distinction he makes between the personal and the impersonal; or, (3) use "spatiality" as an alternative. The third option, i.e., to take spatiality as equivalent to Gunton's third transcendental is favoured for the following nine reasons: (a) the weakness of Gunton's concept of "relationality" in indicating fully what it is meant to represent; (b) the validity of the distinction Gunton makes between the personal and the non-personal; (c) the inadequacy of "sociality" being applied to non-personal beings; (d) the same concern for "communion" as Gunton has for sociality, that both are features of personal beings; (e) Gunton's actual use of the concept of "space" in crucial points in predication of the being or essence of the triune God without giving an impression that he regards it as less suitable than relation and otherness for theological and ontological uses;[150] (f) the capacity of the concept of spatiality for being used both for the personal and the non-personal; (g) the fact that spatial imagery (*chora*) is embedded in the patristic concept of perichoresis; (h) the possibility of better service of the concept of spatiality than that of relationality as a supporting or corresponding idea of perichoresis if perichoresis is to be taken to characterise the particular shape of the being of the triune

[149] To be included among the critics who treat Gunton's relationality in a narrower sense than that of communion or sociality, yet not discussed later, is the critique of Zizioulas. See the discussion in the next chapter (§6.1.2. 136 n.56).
[150] Cf. *PTT* 110, 114, 128, 134, 135 and 202.

God; and (i) its merit of encompassing the ontological aspects that Gunton intended to deliver by using the concepts of relation and otherness and at the same time marking out the being of God that he thinks is constituted by the three persons in relation to each other.

Introducing the concept of spatiality is not meant to undermine or distort Gunton's transcendental conceptuality but only to make it less problematic for understanding and more comprehensive for application. It is for the same purpose that I suggest a modification of Gunton's scheme corresponding to taking his third transcendental in terms of spatiality rather than relationality. That is to understand the being of the triune God as consisting in a "spatiality," rather than in a "relationality," deriving from the otherness-in-relation of the Father, the Son and the Spirit.[151] The reason for the suggestion is twofold: that the repetition of similar words (relation and relationality) is avoided, without failing to deliver what Gunton intended with them; and that the concept of spatiality will actually better serve the purpose of indicating the ontological aspect that Gunton derives from the otherness-in-relation of the Father, the Son and the Spirit. If acceptable they would allow us to have a revised version of Gunton's transcendental conceptuality, in which we have "particularity" in support of irreducible substantiality of being in relation; "relationality" in respect to the relational aspect of ontology; and "spatiality" to indicate the ontological shape constituted by the particulars and their relations to each other in otherness.[152]

[151] Cf. *OTM* 7.

[152] In broader senses, Gunton's three transcendental concepts—relationality, perichoresis and substantiality—can serve the purpose of indicating what is being developed here with the concept of spatiality. Cf. *OTM* 179 (perichoresis), 191 (substantiality), and 229 (relationality).

Chapter 6 One, Many and Three

This chapter continues the quest that was begun in the previous chapter in search of a way to have Gunton's transcendental conceptuality better understood and applicable, yet now with focus on the scheme of the one and the many Gunton uses for his transcendental enquiry. The aim is to lead the discussion to a revised version of the scheme in which we have the one, the many *and* the three, the last more explicitly than its original use by Gunton in correspondence to the notion of "spatiality" that has been suggested in the previous chapter.

6.1. One and Many

Gunton's use of the one and the many in his theological and transcendental projects is to such an extent that a careful examination of these terms will lead to the heart of his programme, though it is difficult to find one who has dealt with his use of the abstract terms. Critics of his conceptuality tend to focus on his transcendental concepts developed through deployment of them, criticising them as "abstract" or "general."[1] This is odd since it is quite natural to expect that questions formed using general and abstract terms are given answers made of terms that are equally general and abstract.[2] In response to criticisms that Gunton's transcendentals are abstract or general, therefore, a simple answer might be given: they are thus because they are generated in response to general questions and for wide application. If, therefore, abstractness or generality is to be an issue regarding Gunton's transcendental conceptuality his use of the one and the

[1] The issue of abstraction and speculation raised by Bartholomew, 'Remedy?', 128f; Kilby, 'Perichoresis,' 443; and Nausner, 'Failure,' 417 and 420, which are already addressed in the previous chapter. Here a note on Fermer's concern about generality ('Limits,' 185 n.106; cf. also, Nausner, 'Failure,' 417 and 420). Fermer says that his concern with Gunton's "transcendentals" is an issue of which Gunton is well aware, namely their "extreme generality" ('Limits,' 153), yet that is what Gunton says about Coleridgean ideas, not his transcendentals. If, besides, Fermer's argument is correct that the ontology developed by Gunton is deficient because it is determined by theology, or a particular theology, the problem of Gunton's project would be particularity rather than generality, especially in comparison to the ontology developed by a philosophy of more general nature as he finds in Aquinas ('Limits,' 170f).

[2] Apart from Gunton's, the following are among the contemporary discussions in which the terms of the one and the many are employed for dealing with similar questions to Gunton's: Joseph A. Bracken, *The One in the Many: A contemporary reconstruction of the God—world relationship*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001; W. Norris Clarke, *The One and the Many: A Contemporary Thomistic Metaphysics*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2001; Richard S. Briggs, *One God Among Many?*, Cambridge: Grove Books, 2006, 3–28; John Zizioulas, *The One and the Many: Studies on God, Man, the Church, and the World Today*, Alhambra, CA: Sebastian Press, 2010; Marc A. Pugliese, *The One, the Many and the Trinity: Joseph A. Bracken and the Challenge of Process Metaphysics*, New York: Catholic University of America Press, 2011.

many should be addressed first, for example by asking whether it is appropriate to use such terms for discussing concrete and particular matters.[3]

Some critics approach this matter with caution. Paul Collins, for instance, when dealing with Zizioulas' ontology of the Church,[4] notes the danger of using the one and the many in such a way as to privilege one strand of Christian tradition over others. He then proposes a use of them as a 'hermeneutical tool to enable dialogue between different traditions and ecclesial authority and polity' in order to 'not only allow differing traditions, with different polities, to dialogue with one another, but also to find an authentic means of acknowledging each other's understandings and forms of ecclesial authority.'[5] This may be a valuable suggestion in certain respects, yet it raises questions as to whether such an approach does not reduce ontology to hermeneutics as well as what other concepts it has for use for discussing the being of the Church.[6] In the absence of alternatives, the proposal of the hermeneutical use of the one and the many could be perceived as depriving the Church of her primitive conceptual tools for her self-understanding while paving the way for privileging a kind of ontology without going through necessary argumentation. This certainly appears to be the case with Collins' vision of the 'one Church with different but comparable forms of polity.'[7] If the idea is meant to be a hermeneutical description, as seems likely, a question may be raised as to what Collins means by "one Church" and by "many forms of polity" in

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[3] Other areas where the one and the may are employed include: in philosophy, for example, Edward C. Halper, *One and Many in Aristotle's Metaphysics: the Central Books*, Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1989; Ancient Near Eastern religions, Barbara Nevling Porter (ed.), *One God or Many: Concepts of divinity in the ancient world*, Chebeague Island: the Casco Bay Assyriological Institute, 2000; Christianity and other religions, Paul F. Knitter, *One Earth Many Religions: Multifaith dialogue and global responsibility*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995; one Church and many churches, John, F. Nash, *Christianity: the One, the Many: What Christianity Might Have Been and Could still Become*, Bloomington, IL: Xlibris, 2007; the Bible, Christine Helmer and Christof Landmesser (eds), *One Scripture or Many? Canon from Biblical, Theological and Philosophical Perspectives*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; mission, Richard Tiplady, *One World or Many? The Impact of Globalisation on Mission*, Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2003; faith and nation, Rachel Morton, *One Island Many Faiths: the Experience of Religion in Britain*, London: Thames & Hudson, 2000; poetry, Beth E. Roberts, *One Voice and Many: Modern Poets in Dialogue*, Cranbury, NJ: University of Delaware Press, 2006; art, Grant H. Kester, *The One and the Many: Contemporary Collaborative Art in a Global Context*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011; and politics, Paul Kingsnorth, *One No, Many Yeses: A Journey to the Heart of the Global Resistance Movement*, London: the Free Press, 2003.

[4] Paul Collins, 'Authority and Ecumenism,' in Douglas H. Knight (ed.), *The Theology of John Zizioulas: Personhood and the Church*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007, 147–58.

[5] Collins, 'Authority,' 156.

[6] Collins, 'Authority,' 157, introduces three categories that can be used in conjunction with the concept of the one and the many: 'personal,' 'collegial' and 'communal.' Yet they appear to be meant not as alternative so much as supplementary to the concept of the one and the many. For he suggests them as 'to be used to highlight the tensions between the different traditions' emphases on different ecclesial authority.'

[7] Ibid.

relation to the existence of many actual churches and the belief in one Church. If, on the other hand, it is perhaps meant to be an ontological description he may still be challenged to answer the question as to whether it is appropriate to discuss the matter by reducing the ontology of many churches to different forms of polity. The Church as the body of Christ is surely not subject to periodic or sporadic fluctuations, yet the idea itself of the body of Christ as one and many is in the Bible and as a way of Christian understanding of what the Church is.[8] The focus of this chapter, therefore, is not on whether we should give up using the one and the many for discussion of ontological matters. Attention will be given, rather, on how Gunton uses the terms, the one and the many, and whether there is a need for clarification or room for further development. Three questions can guide us in conducting an examination of Gunton's scheme: (1) why Gunton uses the general and abstract terms in a quest for concepts which are intended to be applicable even to understanding of a particular being (or person); (2) in what way Gunton uses the one and the many, or what exactly he refers them to; and (3) how complete the scheme is in dealing with the questions that Gunton attempted to answer by using the one and the many.

6.1.1. Gunton's rationale

There are two things that can be considered as reasons for why Gunton uses the terms of the one and the many in his theological and transcendental projects. Firstly, Gunton uses them in line with his perception that certain questions arise 'in different but recognizably similar forms,'[9] in different times and places.[10] Among them are questions concerning relations between society and the individual, between human beings and the rest of the world and between God and the world—the three main areas addressed in Gunton's transcendental project.[11] These questions are too "big" to be dealt with lightly, with myriad factors to take into account, and yet any society or generation can hardly avoid them without taking the risk of letting itself to run into conflict or disorder unless its members are all good enough to live together in peace and order, with no need for a general council or decision. As a theologian Gunton took upon himself the task of dealing with these questions by identifying some problems of the culture of his times—

[8] Cf. Rom 12:4–5; 1 Cor 10:16–17; 12:12–27; Eph 4:11–13. Cf. also Gal 3:28; Col 3:15, for being one in Christ.
[9] *OTM* 16f.
[10] Especially so among people with the same faith. As one says, 'people in places as far removed as Australia and Jamaica, or Scotland and California, all asking much the same questions about what it means to follow Jesus in today's world' (John Drane, *The McDonaldization of the Church: Spirituality, Creativity and the Future of the Church*, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2000, ix).
[11] Cf. *OTM* 18f and 218f.

such as individualism, collectivism, fragmentation and homogenisation—and the framework under which such problems took shape and providing alternative frameworks that might help to promote less problematic and more wholesome ways of thinking and living in the world.[12] It is to serve these purposes that he uses the one and the many, thereby enabling his discussion to deal with complex issues and questions in clear yet comprehensive terms and to express his own understanding of the matters in simple yet wide-ranging terms.

It will remain true that using the one and the many involves generalisation and abstraction to some degree, an issue that has been briefly mentioned previously. In case, however, that one wishes to challenge Gunton's use of the one and the many for that reason, arguing that we should abstain from using these terms, two further notes need to be made about Gunton's own position. The first is that Gunton knows that 'all generalisations are dangerous,'[13] even though he himself engages in some sort of generalisation and abstraction, as noted by critics.[14] The reason is that the issue for Gunton is not generalisation or abstraction in themselves but, rather, what kind of generalisation and abstraction they are and, to add, for what purpose and to what extent they are made. Thus, secondly, using the general and abstract terms of the one and the many does not necessarily mean a suppression of the particular and the concrete. The opposite is the case, insofar as Gunton is concerned. That is, he focuses on the general and the abstract for the sake of the particular and the concrete.[15] Gunton, in other words,

[12] Gunton's *The One, the Three and the Many* is comprised of two parts which are solely dedicated to this task, with its main focus on rethinking of the "framework" within which human life takes place. See, in particular, 7, 51, 59, 87, 140, 157, 196 and 227.
[13] *IA* 22, in the context of speaking of Hellenism.
[14] As noted by Webster, 'Gunton,' 27, according to which Gunton's reading of Barth is 'more of a presentation of the *grandes lignes*' and has the disadvantage of 'criticism by generalization.' That said, in two respects, Webster's reading of Gunton (*TC* 162–5) appears problematic, perhaps more than Gunton's presentation of Barth. First of all, while Webster bases his argument on some quotations from Gunton, he does so without doing justice to the context in which Gunton actually speaks of the "merit" of Barth's "renewed attention to the relation between creation and redemption" (162). Moreover, Webster does not note that Gunton expresses no objection to the proposition that 'the covenant is oriented to the election of the human race' (ibid). The issue for Gunton is the tendency he finds in Barth 'to treat the created order instrumentally, as a means to an end in which it shares, indeed, but not as fully as it should' (165). This is a point that should have been addressed by Webster but is absent in his dealing with Gunton's treatment of Barth's doctrine of the relation between God and the world. Webster's defence of Barth's doctrine of election as 'God's self-election to life in partnership with creature in the creatures own active life of obedience' (ibid) is rather untoward.
[15] Cf. *OTM* 191; *BB* 147. Cf. also, §5.1, 112 and n.49.

is so concerned with the status of the particular and the concrete that he is at the same time concerned with the general and the abstract.[16]

The second reason for which Gunton uses the abstract terms of the one and the many is concerned with his intention to develop a transcendental conceptuality in and for wider context than theology itself, to include both the social and the cosmic realms.[17] This is a result of Gunton's framing of his programme by locating it between Aquinas' and Barth's programmes, i.e., in a way to be more like the latter in its starting point and like the former in its orientation.[18] Thus, to repeat,[19] Gunton's programme is like Barth's in developing a theology through reflection on God's particular actions in the world through the works of the Son and the Spirit as recorded in Scripture, while it is more like Aquinas' in aiming at a transcendental system that can be applied to the understanding of being in general.[20] This eclectic combination of the two preceding programmes helps Gunton to lay foundations for his 'trinitarian transcendental analogy of being and becoming,' that is to say, 'a conception of the structures of the world in the light of the dynamic of the being of the triune creator and redeemer.'[21] Of course, were it not for the triune act of salvation there would be little support for using the one and the many in Christian theology. Yet, without a transcendental purpose, like Gunton's, there would be little point in doing so, since there are less abstract terms like "God," "Lord," "Father," "Son" and "Spirit" that can be used for discussing or expressing Christian faith.

Gunton shares a commonality with Zizioulas in using the terms of the one and the many for further development of Christian thought, though with the difference that Zizioulas

[16] The word "individual," for instance, let alone other terms such as "society" and "world," is surely an abstract term in the sense that it refers not so much to a concrete thing (David, John or Paul) but just any one of the many from which it is abstracted and to which it is directed. Despite being abstract, however, it has a crucial function to indicate one among the many in relation to other ones, and so needs to be properly defined in the realm of abstraction and generality. For Gunton's discussion of the matter, see *BB* 137 in reference to Barth, *Dogmatics* I.2., 881 and Eberhard Jüngel, *Gottes Sein ist im Werden*, Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1967, 43.
[17] Cf. *OTM* 18f and 218.
[18] Cf. *OTM* 140f.
[19] Cf. §5.1. 109f.
[20] For a critique of Gunton in respect to some aspects of Barth, see Webster, 'Gunton,' 27–9. For a critical view of Gunton's programme in relation to the theology and language of Aquinas', see Fermer, 'Limits,' 173; Holmes, '*Analogia*,' 43f.
[21] *OTM* 141. The significance of the doctrine of the creation for Gunton's transcendental project is manifold: (1) as the primary context for the question of the one and the many; (2) as a place where problems of antiquity and modernity are identified; (3) as a stage on which the doctrine of God and transcendental concepts are tested; and (4) as a field for seeking different ways of inhabiting the world and treating its inhabitants. Cf. *OTM* 53, 123 and 230; *TC* 26 and 49.

does so in regard to the ontology of the Church and Gunton more in respect to being in general.[22] 'The Church,' says Zizioulas, 'is built on the historical experience of those who, from being scattered and opposed to one another, were brought together, reconciled and united in the person of Christ.'[23] 'For the Apostles John and Paul, and for Saint Ignatius of Antioch,' he continues, 'this assembly of God's people in one place and with one mind is the foundation of all ecclesiology.'[24] He goes further to say that 'the Church, although one, exists as Churches, in the plural, and these Churches exist as one Church.'[25] This can be seen as something *new*, if Scripture's use of the one and the many is understood as primarily consisting of the relation between the members of one gathering,[26] and something *controversial*, if it is seen as privileging one ecclesiological vision.[27] That said, while this ontology of the Church as simultaneously one and many is surely Zizioulas' version of ecclesiology,[28] it is hard to deny its firm rootedness in the biblical idea of "we" as one and many,[29] as it is in the 4th century Christian theology which he understands as teaching, 'the way in which God exists involves simultaneously the "One" and the "Many".'[30] As for the relation of Zizioulas' work to Gunton's, the former's precedence may well suggest the latter's dependence.[31] The relationship, however, is more complicated than a simple reliance, as noted by Jenson.[32]

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[22] D. Knight evaluates Zizioulas' work as 'the most searching enquiry into the relationship between the one and the many' (*Zizioulas*, 4), though it needs to be qualified because Zizioulas' enquiry is more into personhood and the ontology of the Church than into the notion of the one and the many itself. That is, he uses the one and the many for the sake of discussing personhood and ontology. More or less, the same can be said of Gunton's use of them. The notion of the one and the many itself is, I suppose, still in need of 'a searching enquiry.'

[23] Zizioulas, *Lectures*, 128.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Zizioulas, *Lectures*, 161. Zizioulas uses the word "Church" with a capital letter even in reference to a local church, reflecting his idea of "the catholic Church": 'each local Church represents the whole Eucharistic assembly and the recapitulation of all things, in each particular place,' in contrast to the view in which the catholic Church is seen as 'the worldwide or ecumenical Church precedent over the many actual churches' (140).

[26] In Paul's letters, references to 'we' as one body with many members (e.g. Rom 12:3–5; 1 Cor 10:17; Gal 3:28; Col 3:15) are mainly directed to local gatherings in their immediate contexts (in Rome, the Galatia, Colossae and Corinth). However, given the place of Paul as the one who writes them to churches in different locations with the same idea and in the same spirit, it is not unreasonable to think of the biblical image of one body and many members as applying to relations across churches as well as among the members of one local church.

[27] As found in Collins, 'Authority,' 154–6, according to which Zizioulas' use of the Pauline motif of the one and the many to support an ecclesial structure is not 'culture-free.'

[28] Cf. Brown, 'On the Criticism,' 35–78.

[29] See n.9 above for biblical references.

[30] J. Zizioulas, 'The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity: The Significance of the Cappadocian Contribution,' in Schwöbel, *Trinitarian Theology Today*, 48f.

[31] Cf. Gunton's own comment on his indebtness to Zizioulas: 'I write as someone who has learned from him important lessons not only about all the topics I have discussed so far, but also about the need to specify the type of actions performed by—and therefore the kind of eternal qualities possessed by—the particular persons of the Trinity.' Gunton, 'Persons and Particularity,' in Knight, *Zizioulas*, 107.

[32] Jenson, 'Decision,' 12.

As far as the use of the terms of the one and the many is concerned, it would be safer to assume that Gunton has his own way of using them.

6.1.2. Gunton's scheme of the one and the many

Gunton's primary use of the one and the many appears in his analysis of the history of western transcendentality in reference to two different realities: God and the world; the eternal and the temporal; the immaterial and the material; and so forth. To begin with, in pre-Socratic times, perhaps due to a monistic drive, the one and the many were put in conflict so that either the one or the many, but not both, must be of transcendental significance. In this context, by the one and the many, Gunton refers to two ontological principles; by the one, "being" or "stability;" and by the many, "becoming" or "changeability."[33] Plato synthesised his predecessors' thinking into that whereby the many gain the real standing but only in subordination to the one which is the sole transcendental. Here, by the many, Gunton indicates the "material" and by the one, the "immaterial" or "intellectual."[34] Philo played a significant role, according to Zizioulas, in mediating between the Greek and the Hebrew thoughts by his identification of the One with God himself; 'God is the only true "One" because he is the only one who is truly "alone".'[35] Within the budding Christianity itself, which was not exempt from the cultural and religious influences, a tendency emerged to express Christian faith in a similar way to link the one, or the One, with the God of Scripture and the many with the world of time and space.[36] An extreme case might be Gnostic theologies and metaphysics in which the one ("spiritual") is put in radical opposition to the many ("material") in such a way that the world of the many is seen as not real at all and so depreciated.[37] There were Christian theologians whose minds were less influenced by Greek philosophy, yet, as a matter of regress from Christians' progressive overcoming of the Greek transcendentality, the idea of the one as the sole transcendental and the many as something to be overcome was maintained even within the mainline western theology.[38] One significant consequence is that the transcendentality of the one (the "eternal") is consolidated into the soil of the West, while the status of the many (the "temporal") remains dubious or ambiguous.[39] This is the background against which

[33] *OTM* 16–8; *TC* 26f.
[34] *OTM* 20f, 50 and 70; *TC* 28–31.
[35] Zizioulas, *Communion*, 163.
[36] *OTM* 51–61 and 120–3.
[37] *OTM* 94–100 (97); *TC* 47–50.
[38] *OTM* 140f.
[39] *OTM* 24.

Gunton understands both the modern revolt against Christianity and its failure to come up with an alternative. Modernity, in his understanding, represents a strong assertion of the many ("the world" or "humanity") over against the oppressive one ("God"). Yet the assertion was made in a way that elevated the many to the sole transcendental status, while rejecting the one for the sake, or in the name, of the many.[40] This brief review is, admittedly, an oversimplified version of Gunton's still concise overview of a complex history. Its purpose, at this point, is to example his use of the one and the many in reference to two kinds of reality of ontological difference as it appears in his view of the western transcendentality.

Before looking at the second way in which Gunton uses the one and the many, it would be helpful to see how they are also used by Zizioulas because there is a difference as well as a similarity between the two. To begin with, Zizioulas uses the one and the many in various ways, including those already shown. In his theological discussions, the one is used to refer to "God," "nature" or "substance" and the many for the three "persons" of the Trinity.[41] In his Christological discussions, on the other hand, he uses the one in reference to Jesus Christ as an "individual being" and the many in reference to Jesus Christ as a "corporate being," corporate with God and the Church, so as the one and the many.[42] Another way of using the one and the many appears in his discussion of the ontology of the Church, where, by the one, he refers to the "catholic Church" and, by the many, "actual local Churches."[43] Lastly, he also applies the one and the many to the relation between the "bishop" (the one) and the "community" (the many).[44] Given this variety, one might say that Zizioulas' scheme of the one and the many is not consistent or constant and so not very helpful. It needs to be noted, however, that there is in it an element of consistency. For Zizioulas, that is to say, the one and the many are used to indicate two essential aspects of ontology, whether it is of the being of God, Christ or Church.

The second way Gunton uses the one and the many is similar to what we have seen in Zizioulas, yet we can approach it by noting the problem that Gunton actually tackles in his transcendental project. The problem is the long-standing tendency in the West to

[40] *OTM* 33, 35 and 39.
[41] See Zizioulas, 'Doctrine,' 48f; *Communion*, 163.
[42] Cf. Zizioulas, *Being*, 130f.
[43] Cf. Zizioulas, *Being*, 112, 145–9, 206; *Lectures*, 140.
[44] Zizioulas, *Being*, 136f.

think that only either the one or the many is real, while the other is subject to the sole reality, or not considered to be real at all. The tendency can operate in various forms, including what we might call "absolute monism" and "oppositional dualism,"[45] each exercising its force upon the mind to achieve the transcendentality of one only, at the expense of the other. For Gunton, however, there is no question regarding the reality of those referred to by the one and the many in the context of the relation between two different realities, e.g., God and the world. Gunton has theologies of God and creation that strongly support the full reality of the being of God and that of the world with their own time and space.[46] If there is a problem for him, therefore, it is neither the one nor the many, nor even those referred to by them; the one and the many are simply conceptual tools used in reference to something of real existence or ontological significance. The problem is more concerned with the forms given to the one and the many and their references: for example, "the one suppressing the many"[47] refers to a problematic conception of God in relation to the world; and "the many disregarding the one," a deficient conception of the world in relation to God.[48]

Gunton's conclusion of his analysis is not that antiquity succeeded in maintaining the transcendentality of the one but failed with the many, whereas modernity failed with the one while succeeding in maintaining the transcendentality of the many. If that were the case it would be sufficient to combine the ancient form(s) of the one with the modern form(s) of the many. For Gunton, the one that fails to uphold the many is itself a problem and the many that fail to respect the one is not a solution.[49] He takes antiquity as an example of the one that failed to uphold the rights of the many and modernity as an example of the many that did not succeed even in supporting the rights of the many.[50] In their failures, however, each era highlighted the importance of both the one and the many. Modernity, for instance, shows the inevitability of the one by bringing in new forms of the one such as an aggregate of the ones, a homogenised mass or a new universal.[51] The one, much like the many, indicates something that cannot be removed

[45] By "absolute monism" is meant the kind of metaphysics wherein either the one or the many is regarded as the sole reality, with the other being denied its status of being real; and by "oppositional dualism" that in which the one and the many are both given ontological significance yet in a way to oppose or exclude each other.
[46] Cf. *OTM* 204–9; *PTT* 110, 202; *TC* 134–45.
[47] For Gunton's critique of a unitary conception of God, see *OTM* 24f, 37, 177, 199.
[48] For Gunton's critique of a revolt of the many against the one, see *OTM* 122f.
[49] The two problems are discussed in terms of 'Christianity's false eternity' (*OTM* 80–5) and 'Modernity's false temporality' (*OTM* 85–9).
[50] Cf. *OTM* 16–21.
[51] *OTM* 28–37.

from its ontological place but only ignored, displaced, replaced or responded well to. Gunton thus ends his analysis with a conclusion that there is a common failure in both eras to secure the status of the many because of a common failure to have an adequate form of the one: hence, as a maxim for him, there can be no genuine freedom of the many without an appropriate form of the one.[52]

Consequently, Gunton aims to find an appropriate form of the one, yet still with a great, perhaps greater, concern for the many.[53] For Gunton it becomes a quest for a third concept in which the one and the many each have a due place. To be more precise, it is a quest for "the one that respects the many" or "the many that respects the one."[54] Gunton's use of the one and the many here comes closer to that which we have seen above in Zizioulas. Like Zizioulas, Gunton draws on Cappadocian theology for a conception of God as a communion of the Father, the Son and the Spirit.[55] In his own words, the being of God consists in 'a relationality that derives from the otherness-in-relation of Father, Son and Spirit.'[56] In Gunton's conceptuality, therefore, the concept of "communion" is to large extent equivalent to that of "relationality," both concepts becoming linked to his quest for an appropriate form of the one. Here the many is used in reference to Father, Son and Spirit, whereas the one refers to the one God as communion or relationality constituted by the three persons in relation and otherness.[57] Gunton takes theology understood this way as the basis for his development of a doctrine of creation, or a theology of nature, whose being he also conceives as consisting in a "relationality" that derives from the otherness-in-relation of particular

[52] *OTM* 37; *PTT* 129.
[53] See *OTM* 148, 161, 173, 190, 227, 229–31; *PTT* 143, 205; *TC* 118, 145, 190.
[54] *OTM* 50 and 131.
[55] See *OTM* 31, 165, 191, 215; *PTT* 71, 94; *TC* 9.
[56] *OTM* 7. This description of the being of God as communion appears to be the place where a critique of Gunton's conceptuality can begin, yet it needs to be noted that it is Gunton's conception of the being of God, expressed in his own choice of language, so it is necessary to carefully treat Gunton's work in relation to it.
[57] Relationality for Gunton, like Zizioulas, is not the ultimate ontological ground of the being of God. Zizioulas correctly says that Gunton rejects the Father as the cause of the Trinity, yet it is incorrect to infer that Gunton's rejection of the priority of the Father inevitably leads to 'the position that it is the *relations* that *constitute* the Trinity' (*Communion*, 136 n. 70). There are four things that can be said in response to Zizioulas' interpretation of Gunton's saying that 'all three persons … *together* the cause of the communion in which they exist in *relations* of mutual and reciprocal *constitution*' (*PTT* 196): (1) that for Zizioulas the Father is the cause of the communion and for Gunton it is the three persons together, not relation or relationality (see *PTT* 196, 205; *OTM* 164); (2) that relations for Gunton exist only between persons, and so it is person, not relation, that for him is primitive both logically (like Strawson) and ontologically (like Zizioulas) (see *PTT* 200); (3) that relationality in its one sense used by Gunton is almost equivalent to Zizioulas' concept of communion (see *OTM* 229); and (4) that the concept of relationality Zizioulas criticises as Gunton's is rather closer to that of Alan J. Torrance whose comparison to Zizioulas made by Gunton appears more helpful to understanding Gunton's position than represented by Zizioulas (see *PTT*, xxiii–xxiv).

things and people.[58] Here, again, the one and the many are used for indicating two aspects of the one reality of the creation: the many in reference to people, animals, plants and things that make up the world; and the one in reference to the world as one constituted by them in their relations to each other. In his second use of the one and the many, to summarise, Gunton uses them for discussion of the ontology of a being, whether it is that of God, World, Church or a Person.[59]

By using the one and the many in such a twofold way as shown above, operating both within one order of reality and across different realities, Gunton provides a comprehensive scheme of the one and the many. In summary, "the one" is used not only in reference to God in relation to the world, but also to the being of the triune God constituted by the three persons and the one world made up of many things and people. In the case of "the many," in addition to its traditional use in reference to the world vis-à-vis God, it is also used in reference to the three persons of the triune God and to those that make up the world. This way of using the one and the many has enabled Gunton to bring almost all areas of ontology and relation under his purview.[60]

6.1.3. Evaluation

The question remains as to how complete or comprehensive Gunton's scheme of the one and the many is. An approach can be made by looking at how Gunton operates the scheme in relation to his transcendental concepts: perichoresis, substantiality and relationality. In Gunton, as noted previously, there is a correspondence between his first transcendental "perichoresis" and the question of the one, as he presents the former as an answer to the latter, i.e., the form of the one, or the relation of the many, within one order of reality,[61] in response to the problematic ones such as collectivism, totalitarianism and homogenization.[62] For Gunton perichoresis also has a function to play in helping to understand the relation between the world (the many) and God (the

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[58] See *OTM* 229–31. Cf. also, Gunton, 'Trinity,' 954.
[59] For an argument for the use of the term "being" of God, see Zizioulas, *Lectures*, 55.
[60] Gunton's use of the one and the many may well correspond in its comprehensiveness to Barth's theory of two kinds of relation: "relation within one order of reality" and "relation between one order of reality and the other" (Barth, *Dogmatics* II.1., 311. Cf. *BB* 160f). There would be a difference, however, if Barth thinks of the relation within one order of reality (God or the creation) as that of "necessary" interdependence while there may be "ontological" independence between one order of reality and the other. For Gunton stresses, especially in his later works, that the Father is related to the Son and the Spirit, and things and people are related to one another, yet in otherness, never by necessity, even within one order of reality.
[61] See *OTM* 163–73, 191; *PTT* 134, 140, 151, 198; *TC* 227. Cf. Barth, *Dogmatics* II.1., 620–31.
[62] See *OTM* 13, 122, 104, 125, 152, 204.

one),[63] although it is now accompanied by an understanding of God and the world, respectively, as one and many on their own ontological ground, as shown above.

Similarly, Gunton proposes the concept of "substantiality," after refining it in the theology of the Trinity, as an answer to the problem of the form of the many—the particulars within one order of reality. What Gunton wants to establish by developing the transcendentality of substantiality is ontological particularity or uniqueness of a being (this thing and not another), in response to modern problems of the many found in individualism, disintegration and fragmentation of culture.[64] Gunton's substantiality is also meant, though less explicitly expressed, to be applicable to understanding two distinct realities (e.g., God and the world, or the personal and the impersonal) as substantial beings which are related to each other and yet distinct from and other than each other.[65]

More or less the same can be said of Gunton's third transcendental, "relationality," at least as is intended by Gunton. There are two difficulties, however, that one may not face when considering the other two. First, on an inattentive reading, it is difficult to know what problem Gunton has in mind when exploring his third transcendental that has not yet been considered in his previous explorations of perichoresis and substantiality.[66] It is difficult to know, secondly, whether his third transcendental concept has a corresponding element in his scheme of the one and the many as the other two have.[67] Having established the first and second transcendentals, each in respect to the question of the relational (the one) and the substantial (the many), Gunton's third move should apply to another aspect of being. We have caught a glimpse of it above when his concept of the being of God is considered to be in a "relationality" deriving from the otherness-in-relation of the many.[68] On closer inspection, however, we notice that a full grasp of this concept of relationality, if meant to be distinct from the concepts of "perichoresis" and "substantiality," would require a framework in which there are

[63] See *OTM* 38, 173–8, 185.
[64] *OTM* 188–95.
[65] See *OTM* 193–5; *TC* 153.
[66] In developing the transcendentality of "perichoresis" and "substantiality," Gunton deals with the problem of "relation" (*OTM* ch.6 corresponding to ch.3) and that of "otherness" (ch.7 corresponding to ch.2).
[67] "the many" is already used in reference to the substantial, i.e. concrete particulars, and "the one" in reference to the relation of the many as a whole. Using them for different purposes and with different references may not be a problem itself, but it could be problematic and confusing unless the difference is indicated or explained.
[68] §6.1.2.

three, rather than two, conceptual supports. The reason is that what Gunton intends to indicate by that "relationality" about the being of God comes into light only after, or in distinction from, knowing "relation" and "otherness" of the three persons, in such terms as 'a unity that also respects plurality,'[69] or 'a oneness which is not at the expense of the many,'[70] over against 'a form of society in which the particular is suppressed.'[71] This notion of unity or oneness is not about the one that simply stands in contrast to the many but in a mutually constituting relation with the many in such a way as that in which the many are related to each other as well as to the one. The trouble for us, if not for Gunton, is that the schematic framework of his project has only two operational and referential factors, namely the one and the many.

Consequently, an imbalance is created between the intention to present three transcendentals and the scheme utilised for that purpose. This imbalance is, in my view, the major quandary in Gunton's works, yet not limited to his works, and thus deserving a careful examination. Let us look at the notions of the one and the many as they are used by Gunton in his transcendental project, this time with the problem identified above in mind. While for discussion's sake it is said above that "the one" corresponds to "the relational" and "the many" to "the substantial," a closer examination will show that it is unclear whether Gunton uses "the one" in correspondence to relation, substance or something of both. In his diagnosis of the problem, he shows a use of "the one" in contrast to "the many," mainly in the sense of the relation of the many.[72] Yet, as noted, he also uses "the one" in respect to the ontology of God, the world, human society and a person, considering each being to be substantial as well as relational.[73] These two different ways of using the one can be confusing or a source of misunderstanding when co-present without a clear demarcation. One might well think that what Gunton intended to refer to in the second way might be better expressed if he selected another term for that purpose rather than repeating "the one," for the simple reason that it has already been used. Yet it should be noted that whilst Gunton repeats the same term he does not use it in the same sense; one is used in a narrower sense in contrast to the many and the other in a wider sense inclusive of the many.

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[69] *OTM* 21.
[70] *OTM* 212.
[71] *OTM* 221.
[72] In *OTM* 151 and 213, for example, Gunton refers to "society" by "the one," which he uses in contrast to "the many," by which he refers to "the individual" or "person."
[73] In *OTM* 212 and 221.

It is the many, not the one ever, that Gunton uses in relation to his discussion of particularity or substantiality.[74] Here again, however, Gunton's project is hampered by his actual use of the term, the many, mainly in a collective sense despite intending to use it in relation to the particular rather than the general. He argues that everything and everyone can find their true being as they are related to each other and to the one.[75] He also argues that the many are each distinct and different by virtue of the fact that they are related to each other.[76] Yet, to be precise, what is being argued is the ontological status of the many, i.e., in relation to each other and to the one, rather than an ontology of a particular being. This consideration of the ontology of the many mainly in relation to, or over against, the one, leaves an impression that the many in Gunton is considered only collectively, despite his attention to the substantiality of each being of the many.[77]

The point can be pressed further by looking at Gunton's concept of substantiality against the background of his scheme of the one and the many. Substantiality is intended by Gunton as a conceptual support of the particularity or uniqueness of things and people, especially against modern threats of collectivism and homogenization.[78] That said, there appears a mismatch between that intention and his description of the substantiality of God as residing 'not in his abstract being, but in the concrete particulars that we call divine persons and in the relations by which they mutually constitute one another.'[79] This is a controversial part of Gunton's work, often cited for criticism,[80] yet the point here is that Gunton's development of the concept of substantiality is made in an argument for the transcendental status of "the many" yet in reference to "the one." This double standing of Gunton's concept of substantiality raises a question as to whether his substantiality should be understood as meant for a *hypostatic* being or an *ousianic* being or for both. If it is meant for the substantiality of a *hypostatic* being (like that of the Son) the reader would face a discrepancy between the connotation of the collective sense of "the many" (meaning particular *beings*) and the idea meant for *a* particular being which Gunton wants to promote by the concept of substantiality. If, on

[74] See *OTM* 6, 44, 190f, 204f. Gunton's use of the one and the many is quite clearly demarcated by having in the conceptual group of the one "relation," "relatedness," "unity," "universality," "perichoresis" and so forth, and in the group of the many "particularity," "otherness," "distinctiveness," "plurality," "diversity," "individuality" and so forth.
[75] *OTM* 37f.
[76] *OTM* 45.
[77] See *OTM* 189 and 191.
[78] See *OTM* 6, 196, 203, 213, 219, 228.
[79] *OTM* 191.
[80] E.g. Fermer, 'Limits,' 166; Nausner, 'Failure,' 414.

the other hand, it is intended for the substantiality of an *ousianic* being (like that of God), the reader would be left with no further referential or conceptual tool with which to refer to a *hypostatic* being vis-à-vis an *ousianic* being.

Further light can be shed on the point under development by turning back to Gunton's concept of relationality as his third transcendental. Given that Gunton suggests "perichoresis" as the first transcendental to support the ontological significance of the one (or relation), and "substantiality" as the second transcendental to support the ontological significance of the many (or otherness), it is not sensible to construe his quest for a third transcendental as a search for what is already established. What he seeks to understand with the aid of the new concept should be something else, because it is something that results from Gunton's first and second transcendentals coming together as fully developed.[81] In other words, an ontological aspect in which *both* relation and otherness (equivalent to the one and the many in his ontological discussion) contribute to our understanding.[82] His term for the third transcendental, however, is "relationality," which within his conceptuality is almost interchangeable with the term that he uses for his first transcendental, perichoresis.[83] Besides, as we saw, there are cases showing that his use of the concept of perichoresis overlaps with what he means by relationality as his third transcendental. Hence our speaking of Gunton's double use of relationality or perichoresis despite his suggestion of them as two distinct concepts: on the one hand, as his first transcendental, they are meant to give a conceptual support to the perichoretic relation of the many, or the relational aspect of ontology;[84] as his third transcendental, on the other hand, they are meant to help to conceive what he considers as a particular being in relation, the very thing that his development of substantiality is intended for.[85]

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[81] As indicated by Gunton beginning the last chapter, "The triune Lord. Towards a theology of the one and the many," by saying that '[t]he trinitarian conception suggested by the two transcendentals we have examined in the previous chapters—perichoresis and substantiality—is that of sociality' (*OTM* 214).
[82] Cf. *OTM* 214–9.
[83] *OTM* 229.
[84] *OTM* 163–73.
[85] Cf. *OTM* 214–29. In speaking of "God" as one and many, the "world" as one and many and "society" as one and many, Gunton appears to intend to say more of the being of God, world or society than simply saying that they are both one and many. According to his theology of the Trinity, for instance, it is not only that God is one and many but also that they are related to each other in a particular way, so *a* communion. Likewise, he does not simply consider "relationality" of the world and "sociality" of the society. In the light of his theology, he also moves toward alternative (particular) forms of relationality (a trinitarian doctrine of creation) and sociality (a trinitarian sociality).

Concerning Gunton's use of relationality and perichoresis, they have features that make it difficult to draw a distinguishing line between them, as we saw three of them. What can be considered here in addition to them is that they are both capable of carrying the narrower sense of "relation" and the broader sense of it closer to "communion" to the extent that not much difference would arise even if perichoresis were exchanged with relationality in Gunton's transcendental conceptuality. This raises a question about the concept of perichoresis: whether modern theologians, including Gunton, have delivered the Patristic concept correctly, incorrectly or differently from its sense as conceived in its original context in their linking of it with "relationality" rather than with something else, like "sociality" or "communion" or "spatiality."[86] This question is closely related to other questions pursued in this work, and an answer was in the preceding chapter with the suggestion that the notion of spatiality is a plausible alternative to Gunton's relationality as his third transcendental. It will suffice here, however, to add that as far as Gunton's work is concerned the concept of perichoresis is used in both ways, either with "relationality" in its narrower sense (as distinct from particularity or substantiality) as meant for his first transcendental, or with "relationality" in its broader sense (almost equivalent to communion, sociality or spatiality) as meant for his third transcendental.

6.2. Three

The problem identified thus far regarding Gunton's transcendental project is not that his first and third transcendentals refer to the same thing. The facts remain that he intended three transcendentals, not two, all with different purposes, however they are interpreted or misinterpreted, and that it is only after having established the first and second transcendentals that he introduces the third in relation to the ontological aspect that he has not yet considered.[87] The problem, rather, is that Gunton has produced his transcendental conceptuality in a way likely to cause confusion and misunderstanding by using almost synonymous terms to indicate two different aspects of ontology: the relational in a narrow sense of it as distinct from the substantial; and that which comes into light as something that encompasses both the relational and the substantial. I have attributed this problem to the discrepancy that appears to exist between Gunton's project, which suggests three transcendentals, and the referential system used for

[86] "Spatiality," again considering that in the middle of the word perichoresis lies a word of spatial imagery (*chora*). Both proponents of the concept of perichoresis and their critics tend to link it with the concept of relationality, which is also implied in the word though.

[87] A simple fact that is ignored by most critics who treat Gunton's transcendental conceptuality as if it had two of the three as one and the same, as noted previously and will be treated in more detail later.

developing them, which has two elements, the one and the many, locating its epicentre in his decision to use "relationality" as his third transcendental.

We might leave things as they are now but, given the critics' common failure to understand Gunton's transcendental conceptuality, even as it is left by Gunton, it might be advisable to go a step further. In the previous chapter, I argued that "spatiality" would better serve than relationality as his third transcendental, suggesting a revised scheme of Gunton's transcendentality in which relationality is replaced by spatiality. What can be added here is an amendment in the use of the one and many in a way that fully accommodates the three ontological features explored by Gunton: that is, to correlate "spatiality" (Gunton's relationality) to "the three" (for which Gunton develops his third transcendental considering both the relational and the substantial). The outcome is a scheme in which we have the one and the many *and* the three, corresponding to relationality, particularity and spatiality. If, as in Gunton, "the one" is for the universal (along with unity, oneness, relation), and "the many" for the particular (diversity, manyness, otherness), "the three" is for the general in which the two sides are related to each other into an ordered whole.

It should be noted that what we are pursuing in terms of "the three" is not something alien to Gunton's conceptuality but what he tried to express in such phrases as "forms of the one that fail to give due space to the many" or "a unity that also respects plurality or, in human terms, individuality and freedom.'[88] In fact, as Esther Meek notes, 'The book title [*The One, the Three and the Many*] suggests both the problem and the solution he will put forward: faulty assumptions that set up the false dualism of the one and the many are the problem, and he alludes to the solution by inserting "the three" between them.'[89] Unfortunately, it remains a suggestion, because "the three" in the book itself refers, primarily, to the triune God as 'the source of all being, meaning and truth,'[90] and the word "three" appears mainly in relation to the three realms of the world (personal, material and cultural)[91] and to the three realms of culture (intellectual, moral and aesthetic).[92] While, further, it is the aim of Gunton's project to use an appropriate form of theology (broadly speaking, a trinitarian theology against unitary conceptions of

[88] *OTM* 37 and 21.
[89] Meek, *Loving*, 333.
[90] *OTM* 177.
[91] Cf. *OTM* 168.
[92] Cf. *OTM* 151 and 176.

God) for developing an integrated understanding of different realms of being and meaning (especially against the fragmentation of culture), there is an obstacle: that he uses the one and "the many" in his discussion of the created,[93] whereas he uses the one and "the three" in his speaking of the Trinity.[94] For the three of the Trinity, in other words, Gunton does not use "the many" but always "the three," while he does not use "the three" but always "the many" for the three realms of the world or culture. There is one place where we can see the contrast most clearly, part of which has already been mentioned:

> An account of relationality that gives due weight to both one and *many,* to both particular and universal, to both otherness and relation, is to be derived from the one place where they can satisfactorily be based, a conception of God who is both one and *three,* whose being consists in a relationality that derives from the otherness-in-relation of Father, Son and Spirit.[95]

In the previous dealing with the latter part of this passage, I suggested using "spatiality" for relationality, or understanding the latter in the sense of the former. What I want to suggest here is to understand the "three" in the "conception of God who is both one and three" in the sense of the "many" in a transcendental context while saving the "three" for a whole being that is both one and many. There are three grounds for this suggestion. Firstly, even in Gunton's work itself, there is an example of the theological use of "many," i.e., 'a theology in which both the one and the many have due place,'[96] which in Gunton is equivalent to the aforementioned phrase "a conception of God who is both one and three," both in apparent reference to the triune God.[97] Secondly, the use of the "three," as in the citation above, goes against Gunton's emphasis on conceptual clarity since it muddles the distinction between the three and the many, the distinction maintained in the title of the book of his transcendental project. Also, thirdly, the "three" that is used next to the "one" as if in the sense of the "many" would not help Gunton's argument for the third concept ('a third factor') without whose mediation, he

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[93] Cf. *OTM* 16–21. 'Thus we return to the two themes adumbrated in the first chapter: of the one and the many of the social order, and of the relation of that order to the one and the many of cosmic order' (219).
[94] For two examples, see *OTM* 150. That is, in a passage about the triune God from Gregory of Nazianzus, Gunton finds 'a dynamic dialectic between the oneness and the *threeness* of God of such a kind that the two are both given equal weight in the processes of thought.' Then speaking of possibilities for transcendental exploration, Gunton says that 'they begin to appear when we develop some of the concepts which the Fathers used in order to hold together the one and *the three* in their doctrine of God.' In both citations emphasis added.
[95] *OTM* 7f. Emphasis added.
[96] *OTM* 140.
[97] See *OTM* 141, where Gunton makes it clear what he seeks to develop: 'a trinitarian analogy of being (and becoming): a conception of the structures of the created world in the light of the dynamic of the being of the triune creator and redeemer.'

says, Parmenidean one (antiquity) and Heraclitean many (modernity) tend to collapse the one into the other,[98] because the locus of the third concept is God, which is for Gunton not simply one or three but a dynamic of the one and the many.[99]

Now, with "the three" added in the way described above, we have a revised scheme of the one and the many in which "the one" does not need to be used twice for the relational and for what we have called the spatial. The burden of indicating the latter is now laid upon the notion of "the three." That change would involve further modifications in the use of the one and the many, considering these three: the installation of "the three" for the spatial; the collective connotation of "the many," making it difficult to be used for the particular; and yet the need to have a referential element corresponding to the particular. Hence, in a modified scheme, "the one" can be used for the particular or the singular (rather than for the relational), and "the many" for the relational or the plural (rather than for the particular). These uses are different from Gunton's, so they might be seen as forced or even as distorting Gunton's work in which the one and the many are employed in his own ways. In that case, two things need to be recognised. The first is that we have followed Gunton first and it is on that basis that the suggestion is made, and only to have Gunton's conceptual framework better understood than has been left by him. The second is that the use of "the one" for the singular and "the many" for the plural is not unprecedented but is found in the Bible and biblical studies.

6.2.1. One and many in the Bible

There are two kinds of "one" that is used in the Bible, correspondingly two kinds of "many." The first is the use of the one in reference to an individual member within a larger entity, mainly in the sense of numerical oneness. It is seen in the first part of the imagery of *one* member among the many. Thus, 1 Corinthians 12:26: 'If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it.' Here the word "one" is used not for the unity of the many, as in Gunton, but in reference to the singular, a particular one among many, with an implied emphasis on the significance of that particular one for all (members).[100] Gunton appears wanting to use "the many" for that purpose, with a particular concern for particularity, but, as noted, its

[98] *OTM* 28. Parallel to the problem of the one and the many is the problem of the subjective and the objective. Cf. also, *OTM* 66 and 213, for the effect of the lack of the third factor, a mediating concept.
[99] Cf. *OTM* 141, 144, 149f, 163f; *PTT* 145.
[100] See, also, Rom 5:12, 18; 1 Cor 15:22.

inherent collective connotation makes it unsuitable for that purpose.

We might use the reference to "all" in the cited passage as an opportunity to look at Scripture's use of the many as in this part of 1 Corinthians 12:12: 'just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.'[101] Upon these examples, we can say that Scripture uses "many" in relation to the plural aspect of being, namely to many members of one body or one kind. This use is similar to Gunton's use of the many insofar as plurality is concerned, yet they are different in two respects. First, Gunton uses the many even for the particular and the one for the relational, yet this biblical use of "many" is meant only for the plural when using "one" for the particular. Secondly, for Gunton the many is a concept that has ontological significance for the one, whereas what we have here is a biblical notion of the many that does not have the same significance for the one which is linked to a particular one; the many do not make up the one but, rather, the one stands among the many or on behalf of the many.

The second kind of "one" used in the Bible is already introduced in the second passage cited above, that is, in the imagery of *one* body with many members.[102] Other examples are: *one* flesh by two persons;[103] *one* humanity out of two groups;[104] and *one* household of all people of God.[105] The "one" in these examples also carries the sense of numerical oneness,[106] yet what is referred to is not a particular one standing among or alongside the many but a whole whose ontological content and constitution are closely related to how the many are related to each other. Here "many" have greater ontological significance for one than when it is related to the one linked to a particular one among many, in the sense that the one is only as the many are. With this, we have now found a biblical use of the one and many that is similar to Gunton's.

Considering these two kinds of the one and the many used in the Bible, we conclude that "one" in the Bible is used twice in different senses, the first as indicating "one of many" or "one among many" and the second expressible as "one constituted by many"

[101] For a similar use of the many, see also Rom 5:15, though this time it is used for many people vis-à-vis one person.
[102] Cf. §6.1 n.9, for biblical references.
[103] Matt 19:4–6; Gen 2:24.
[104] Eph 2:14–18.
[105] Eph 2:19–22. Cf. Gal 3:28; Col 3:5-11; 1 Tim 3:14–15; Mark 3:35; and its parallels.
[106] Cf. Matt 19:6, in particular.

or “one as many are,” with different ontological significance of the many for the one in each case. From the perspective of the many, the first happens in the natural or organic level, as in “*one* body with many members” or “*one* person with many personal aspects of the person” or even “*one* kin-group and many individuals within the group.” The second occurs in the personal and interpersonal level, as in “many tribes but *one* people” or “many peoples but *one* nation” or “many nations but *one* world.” The difference is that while the one in the first case can be sufficiently predicated by generic features, the one in the second case can hardly be predicated adequately without taking into account personal characteristics of the many and interpersonal relations between them.

This is a similar situation to what we have encountered previously in Gunton’s work regarding a double use of the concept of *ousia*, substance or being.[107] There was a suggestion made of an interpretation of Gunton’s work as having a move from the *ousia* (God) through the *hypostasis* (Father, Son and Spirit) to the *ousia* (the Trinity) on the basis of an assumption that while the second *ousia* is what Gunton means by the term (thus, “active-*ousia*”) the first *ousia* is supposed in his speaking of Father, Son and Spirit as one God (this time, “supposed-*ousia*”). As for Gunton’s use of the one and the many, however, it is difficult to find a basis for supposing such a double use of the one. He does not use “the one” twice for the singular and the plural but only once for unity or relation while using “the many” in respect to plurality, diversity, otherness, particularity and freedom. It is in that context that the biblical notion of “one,” used both in relation to the one (a part) and many and to the many and one (a whole), helps to see that Gunton’s scheme of the one and the many is not comprehensive enough for a transcendental enquiry and the validity of the modified scheme suggested at the end of the previous section, the scheme according to which a particular entity (the one) is hypostasised by its constituents (the many) into a unique shape (the three).

[107] §3.1.5.

Chapter 7 One, God of the World

The previous discussion, by promoting the conception of being ("one") formed by its constituents ("many") into a particular shape ("three"), made it necessary to look at the theological uses of the word "one" in the Bible. In this chapter, therefore, we shall examine the so-called *Shema* texts in the OT and the NT in which the word "one" is used of God or YHWH in the case of the OT. One reason is to see whether there is any theological support from the Bible for the argument of the previous chapter. Another is to establish a biblical basis upon which to pursue further questions about Gunton's work that will be discussed in the next chapter. It needs to be noted at the outset that the investigation undertaken in this chapter is mainly biblical and hermeneutical, with attention focused on the interpretation of the word "one" used in the Bible. To that extent, the discussion will be a bit distant from an engagement with Gunton's work. One justification, as noted, is the significance of the one God motif for Christian faith as well as Jewish theology and even Islamic monotheism. Another is that there are two remaining questions for our enquiry about Gunton's ontology that can be answered properly by knowing the meaning of the one God, the first about the relationship between the theology of the OT and that of the NT, and the second about the universal applicability of Gunton's transcendental conceptuality as intended by him.

7.1. The *Shema* (Deut 6:4)[1]

There is little to question concerning the significance of the last word in Deut 6:4, אֶחָד ("one"),[2] for the three Abrahamic faiths, whether monotheistic Judaism,[3] trinitarian Christianity,[4] or Islamic monotheism.[5] Perhaps, because of its importance, the

[1] The name "Shema" is used here in reference to Deut 6:4–5, yet with awareness that the name is mainly used as a title of daily prayer in Judaism, recited morning and evening, and the scope is broader, including Deut 6:6–9; 11:13–21; and Num 15:37–41.

[2] The default translation of "אחד" in this work is "one," without a commitment to a particular sense until we reach a conclusion. When needed, therefore, a qualification will accompany the word.

[3] Cf. Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, Philadelphia and Jerusalem: Jewish Publication Society, 1996, 76. Cf. also, R. W. L. Moberly, '"Yahweh is one": The Translation of the Shema,' in his *From Eden to Golgotha: Essays in Biblical Theology*, Atlanta: Scholars, 1992, 75–81 (75); Patrick D. Miller, 'The Most Important Word: The Yoke of the Kingdom,' *Iliff Review* 41, 1984, 17–29; and J. Gerald Janzen, 'On the Most Important Word in the Shema (Deuteronomy VI 4–5),' *Vetus Testamentum* 37, 1987, 280–300.

[4] Cf. N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, London: SPCK, 1992; Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God crucified and other studies on the New Testament's Christology of divine identity*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008; Suzanne Nicholson, *Dynamic Oneness: The Significance and Flexibility of Paul's One-God Language*, Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 2011.

[5] 'Say, He is Allah, the One,' *Sura* 112:1. 'In Islam, all five daily prayers repeat *sura* 117 from the Qur'an that opens "God is one." Significantly, this prayer uses the Hebrew word for "one" (*ahad*) rather than the Arabic *wahad*. The three Abrahamic faiths are united in this affirmation' (Kenneth E. Bailey, *Paul through the Mediterranean Eyes: Cultural Studies in 1 Corinthians*, London: SPCK, 2011, 235f).

theological element of the *Shema* has been patient of various interpretations, despite that it is made of four words and notwithstanding exegetes' common commitment to exegetical integrity and the need to do justice to the text itself. Thus, while two exegetes, Stephen Geller and General Janzen, emphasise the importance of "detailed exegesis against selective quotations of passages and synthetic analysis"[6] and of "avoiding importation of anachronistic philosophical and theological concerns,"[7] none the less they come to a different conclusion about how to interpret the word "one" in the *Shema*. That was the case three decades ago,[8] yet still the same polarity can be observed two decades later.[9] There is a possibility, then, that the text of Deut 6:4 allows for more than one legitimate meaning, not denying that it has one intended meaning but rather recognising that, whatever *the* meaning might be, it should be the kind that allows for different approaches and interpretations. Jewish commentator Jeffrey Tigay even purports that 'the precise meaning of the Shema is uncertain and it permits several possible renderings.'[10] It is in this recognition that he considers the third translation on the list below to be 'the most likely,' yet qualifying his choice by saying that 'it is not certain.'[11] This is a significant remark for our discussion, in that even a text consisting of four particular words is open to different approaches and interpretations. That said, we now proceed to an interpretation of Deut 6:4, surely in due recognition of it as "an" interpretation, yet still a move towards *the* meaning. The discussion will be carried out, not by forcing foreign ideas into the text to draw out a predetermined conclusion but following what the words actually say about God in conversation with their interpretations by scholars and commentators.

To see the issues at stake, we begin by looking at four major translations of the four words in Deut 6:4 that come after *shemaʾ yisrael* (Hear, O Israel), that is, *Adonai eloheynu Adonai echad* (יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד):[12]

(a) YHWH our God is one YHWH (cf. KJV, ASV, RSV);[13]

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[6] Stephen Geller, 'The God of the Covenent,' in B. N. Porter (ed.), *One God or Many? Concepts of Divinity in the Ancient World*, Chebeague, ME: Casco Bay Assyriological Institute, 2000, 290.
[7] In contrast to the way that 'identifies a concern for the "oneness" of Israel's God squarely within Israel's religious history and at the heart of the covenant traditions.' Janzen, 'Most,' 280f.
[8] As observed by Janzen, 'Most,' 280 and 297.
[9] As noted two decades later by Briggs, *One*, 11.
[10] Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 76.
[11] Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 440.
[12] The Tetragrammaton is used in the translations given on the list only for the sake of discussion, especially to maintain its particularity.

(b) YHWH our God, YHWH is one (cf. JPS, NIV, NKJV, ESV);[14]

(c) YHWH is our God, YHWH alone (cf. NRSV, NJPS, NLT);[15]

(d) YHWH is our God, YHWH is one (cf. NASB).[16]

Six observations can be made regarding these four various translations which may serve as a preparation for engaging with underlying arguments. First, whilst the renderings are diverse, they are all of the three words: YHWH (יהוה), our God (אלהינו), one (אחד), only with the first occurring twice. The second is that one particular area of the translational variation is the syntactical relation of the four Hebrew words. As for the first two words, YHWH and our God, there is little disagreement concerning their meanings, yet there are differences as to how they are syntactically related, the question being whether they are in a subject-predicate relation (YHWH is our God) or an apposition relation (YHWH, our God). Thirdly, then, what we have is either two nominal clauses put in sequence as in the translation (d) or one nominal clause with three possibilities as to subject and predicate as in (a), (b) and (c), providing one of the translations is correct. Fourthly, the last word אחד ("one") is another cause of variation, not only syntactically but also semantically, providing us with two questions as to whether it is a sole predicate or a second predicate and in what sense it is used. Fifthly, all four translations on the list have the word "one" directly connected to YHWH, and only indirectly to God, implying that the "one God" language commonly used in the NT scholarship is not an exact representation of the terminology of the *Shema*.[17] Finally, there are changes in translation that accompany the movements from old versions to new ones, which is for me hermeneutically significant as movements towards *the* meaning of the text. For

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[13] *King James Version*, Cambridge: Joseph Bentham Printer, 1769; *American Standard Version*, New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1901; and *Revised Standard Version*, New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1952. Also, "der HERR, unser Gott, ist ein einiger HERR" (Luther Bible) and "Yahweh our God is the one Yahweh" (JB). Cf. S. R. Driver, *Deuteronomy*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1969, 89.

[14] *Jewish Publication Society of America Version*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1917; *New International Version*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978; *New King James Version*, Nashville et al: Thomas Nelson, 1982; and *English Standard Version*, Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001. Likewise, "κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν κύριος εἷς ἐστιν" (LXX), and "Dominus Deus noster Dominus unus est" (VUL). Cf. Nathan MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the Meaning of "Monotheism,"* Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003, 59.

[15] *New Jewish Publication of Society of America Version*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1985; *New Revised Standard Version*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1989; and *New Living Translation, Cambridge*: Tyndale, 1996. Cf. Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 76; S. Dean McBride, "The York of the Kingdom: An exposition of Deut 6:4–5," *Interpretation* 27 (3), 1973, 274; D. L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1—11*, Dallas: Word Books, 1991, 142.

[16] *New American Standard Bible*, Nashville et al: Thomas Nelson, 1977. Cf. Ephraim E. Urbach, *The Sages: their Concepts and Beliefs*, tr. Israel Abrahams, Jerusalem: the Hebrew University, 1979, 20.

[17] An exception is "Our one God is the LORD, the LORD," suggested by F. I. Andersen, *The Hebrew Verbless Clause in the Pentateuch*, New York, Nashville: Abingdon, 1970, 17, as introduced by C. L. Miller, *Verbless Clause in Biblical Hebrew: Linguistic Approaches*, Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999, 5.

example, KJV has moved from (a) to (b) in NKJV, RSV from (a) to (c) in NRSV, ASV from (a) to (d) in NASB, and JPS from (b) to (c) in NJPS.

7.1.1. The syntactical

Focus here is the grammatical and contextual relations of the four words in Deut 6:4 that have given rise to various translations. The argument being developed here is that it is best to interpret them as constituting two verbless clauses, with one subject (YHWH), which is repeated for a reason, and two predications (our God and One), thus "YHWH is our God" for Deut 6:4b (יהוה אלהינו) and "YHWH is One" for 6:4c (יהוה אחד). This interpretation is least preferred, even among the NT scholars.[18] It can be supported, nonetheless, by the following five considerations, the fifth being the meaning of the word "אחד" that will be explored separately in the subsequent section.

Four words, two clauses

Janzen correctly understands Deut 6:4 in terms of 'the dependable ground upon which an exhortation to wholehearted loyalty may appropriately be made,'[19] given what follows in verse 5 ('You shall love YHWH your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might'). While it is possible to find that ground in the statement "YHWH our God is one," as Janzen does, there is a problem with that interpretation: it makes the second YHWH grammatically redundant or as an emphatic repetition. This is hardly acceptable, considering that what Israel is to hear, the object of the imperative שְׁמַע, is not "יהוה אלהינו אחד" but "יהוה אלהינו יהוה אחד." Treating one of the "four" words as not essential to the meaning of the text of which the word itself is an important part appears to be too great a price to pay. The same goes with the interpretations of the *Shema* by Geller and Moberly, as they argue that there is only one predicate in the *Shema* and that is the last word "one." In this case, as Tigay points out, '"YHVH our God is one" would have sufficed.'[20] It is not abnormal but more natural than other suggestions that the first YHWH leads the same construct as the second. We will keep getting back to this matter of double use of YHWH. The initial point to be made here is that YHWH being "our God" and YHWH being "one" both need to be

[18] NT scholars work with different translations of Deut 6:4. With (a), for example, D. J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996, 251f; with (b), Bauckham, *Jesus*, 181 and 185; with (c), D. J. A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, New York et al: Doubleday, 1993, 365; and, with (d), M. Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996, 181 and 185. In Gunton's case, both (a) and (b) are found, even a single work (*CF* 183 and 83).
[19] Janzen, 'Most,' 281.
[20] Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 439.

given due consideration, each as a possible ground on which the call to love for YHWH in verse 5 stands.

YHWH is our God

As a statement that can be made by the first two words, "YHWH *is* our God" must be a sufficient ground for the call to love him wholeheartedly, at least more than "YHWH our God is one," more so if the latter means the word "one" in a numerical sense. Be that as it may, the upholders of the translations (a) and (b) have a justifiable reason, that in most Deuteronomic parallels the words "YHWH" and "our/your God" stand in apposition to each other, rather than as subject and predication.[21] This observation, however, does not necessarily support their choice because it faces us with two options: to interpret the words of the *Shema* in the same way as in others; or treat the *Shema* as an exception to the general rule. Preference, here, will be given to the second interpretation that takes the two words of Deut 6:4b as in a subject and predicate relationship: not simply by treating the *Shema* as an exception to the general rule but by showing its difference from other examples that make the rule. For example, while "YHWH" and "our/your God" in all the parallels function as a noun phrase (e.g., Deut 4:10; 7:6; 12:12 et al), meaning that they always go together, the text under discussion is part of verbless clause(s) whose syntax is still in debate, with questions over which one is the predicate.[22] More importantly, while the two words are appositional to each other in most parallels, as pointed out already, what we have in Deut 6:4 is not "YHWH/our God" but "YHWH/our God/YHWH." Statistically considered, "YHWH" and "our God" should be seen as the two words in an appositional relation.[23] Yet, statistically speaking again, there is no parallel to "YHWH" and "our God" and "YHWH" coming in as a single subject. Further, it is hardly satisfactory to treat the repetition of YHWH as a matter of customary idiom, as done by Moberly.[24] Nor is to interpret it as part of the *casus pendens*, thus 'As for the LORD our God, the LORD is one.'[25] This may be a neat solution to the problem of the recurring YHWH—if it is indeed a problem, yet the translation which begins with a conjunction sounds too awkward to come after the

[21] Cf. Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11*, New York et al: Doubleday, 1991, 337; Miller, *Verbless*, 4; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 439; Moberly, 'YHWH,' 78f.
[22] Cf. Moberly, 'YHWH,' 75; Miller, Verbless, 4.
[23] Moberly argues, from the statistics that in 312 instances where YHWH and God are juxtaposed, the two words are always in apposition, 'in the 313th instance, i.e. Deut 6:4, the same idiom should be discerned' ('YHWH,' 79).
[24] Moberly, 'YHWH,' 80. This will be discussed in the next section.
[25] Jacob Hoftijzer, 'The Nominal Clause Reconsidered,' *Vetus Testamentum* 23, 1973, 484. Cf. also, MacDonald, *Deuteronomy*, 70.

imperative 'Hear, O Israel,' let alone that it does not have a parallel in Deuteronomy either. Furthermore, there are a handful of cases in which "YHWH" and "God" occur as subject and predicate, though divided by the pronoun "he" (הוא), to form a ground of what follows.[26] As is said in Deut 4:39, for example, "YHWH, he is God (יהוה הוא האלהים)," followed by an exhortation to keep his decrees and commands.[27] This is not an exact parallel to the wording in Deut 6:4, as noted by Moberly, yet at least it has a parallel structure in which "YHWH is God" is the ground for something, here obedience to his commands and in 6:4 total commitment to him, a point that is not considered by Moberly.[28] It does provide support to an interpretation of the two words of 6:4b as constituting a nominal clause functioning as a ground for what follows in verse 5 ("YHWH is our God, so love him …").[29] The point here is that "YHWH" being "our/your God" should be such a condition for the kind of covenant love demanded in the *Shema* as that it can hardly be appropriate to put the words in apposition *just because* that is the case in general. In addition, in an important sense, the statement "YHWH our God is one" is different from "YHWH is our God …." That is, in the first case, "YHWH our God" is a subject and so old information ("old" in the sense of being in the position to be predicated of, not the predicate itself) that is predicated by new information "one" ("new" in the sense of coming into the position to predicate of the known subject). In the second case, on the other, "our God" is new information ("new" in the grammatical sense explained above, not in the sense that it is previously unknown) so that YHWH being our God can be taken as a proper basis of the subsequent call for the unreserved love for YHWH.[30]

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[26] E.g., Deut 4:35, 39; 7:9; 10:17, 21 et al. These passages are not included in Moberly's list of parallels, the reason being that the two words "YHWH" and "our/your/my God" in them are not directly juxtaposed but separated by the insertion of the pronoun "he," thus not exact parallels to Deut 6:4.

[27] The nuance of האלהים will be discussed later.

[28] Another reason for which Moberly dismisses a consideration of "YHWH he our God" passages for interpreting Deut 6:4b predicatively is that, while all other parallels are always appositional, Deut 6:4b does not have some indication of distinctive usage that one could expect, were that intended, like the insertion of the pronoun "he."

[29] In addition, to indicate the significance of the proposition made of the two words (YHWH is your God) for the claim upon Israel to love YHWH, we might include some other Deuteronomy passages which contain the theme of the YHWH-and-love-him having only "YHWH your God" (יהוה אלהיך) in them. Cf. 6:5; 10:12; 11:1, 13, 22; 13:3; 19:9; 30:6, 16 and 20.

[30] For the use of the terms of pragmatics in this study, such as "presupposition" and "assertion," cf. George, Yule, *Pragmatics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, 25f; Robert C. Stalnaker, *Context and Content: Essays on Intentionality in Speech and Thought*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, chs.2 & 4.

YHWH is One

The interpretation of the first two words of Deut 6:4 as subject and predicate leaves us with two options about how to understand the relation of the remaining two words of the verse in relation to them. One is, like translation (c), to interpret them as a non-clausal qualification of what has just been said ("YHWH is our God"), thus meaning that YHWH alone, or only YHWH, is our God. The other is, like translation (d), to construe them as constituting a verbless clause, grammatically independent from the first (YHWH is our God), with its own subject and predicate, thus "YHWH is one." The first option is taken by a majority of contemporary English translations and preferred by several scholars.[31] Thus, Tigay concludes his consideration of three different translations on the basis of present evidence by saying that 'translation (1) [(c) in our list] seems the most likely.'[32] For Moberly, however, this interpretation involves two mistaken judgements about the Hebrew. To introduce the second first—because it is already touched on in the previous discussion and the first is more relevant to the next discussion, it is possible to take "our God" as the predicate of "YHWH," yet a survey of Deuteronomic usage shows that the two words are always in apposition and never in a relationship of subject and predicate.[33] If Moberly is correct in applying this observation to coming up with his preferred translation ("YHWH our God, YHWH is one") then he would need to explain the repetition of YHWH in reply to Tigay's point that the translation leaves the second YHWH superfluous. His explanation is that the name YHWH is used twice because the writer wanted to say "YHWH is one" but also introduce the name in his customary idiomatic way, "YHWH our God."[34] This explanation is not very satisfactory, let alone being too speculative though based on evidence, because it makes the first two words irrelevant or secondary, at least grammatically, to the overall meaning of Deut 6:4. Yet, to repeat, the statement that YHWH is our God can hardly be in a secondary position in demanding such a wholehearted love for YHWH as expressed in Deut 6:5.[35] That should be the case even if the two words are in apposition, as pointed out by Moberly that 'that exclusive relationship is indeed presupposed by the words "YHWH our God".'[36] To be reminded, however, what is presupposed belongs to old information, and so is not directly active in making a connection with the immediately following sentence. In Moberly's translation,

[31] Moberly's observation in 'YHWH,' 77. For the list of scholars, see Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 439f.
[32] Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 440.
[33] Moberly, 'YHWH,' 79f
[34] Moberly, 'YHWH,' 80.
[35] See the argument developed just above under *Four words, two clauses*.
[36] Moberly, 'YHWH,' 81

therefore, while the statement "YHWH is one" connects with the claim to the total love of YHWH, "YHWH is our God" remains at the background like a further qualification of YHWH. However, the call to love YHWH in Deut 6:5 requires such a ground as that YHWH is our/your God, which necessitates that the first two words "YHWH" and "our God," even if translated as appositional, be maintained on the same level with "YHWH is one," as in the translation (d).[37] Therefore, unlike Moberly, we shall take "our God" as the predicate of the first YHWH and yet, like him, we shall take the word "one" as the predicate of the second YHWH, although the discussion of the meaning of אחד in Deut 6:4 may lead to a different conclusion than his.[38]

YHWH, God of Israel, YHWH, God of the whole world

Before we move on to the discussion of the meaning of אחד in the *Shema*, let us explore an explanation of the relation between the two statements made of the four words, namely "YHWH is our God" and "YHWH is one." For a better result of this part of discussion, it is advisable not to bring a predetermined meaning of אחד into discussion, whether it is "one" or "alone," because it might affect our analysis.[39] Let us suppose that the meaning of אחד is unknown—not so much because we do not know the literal meaning of the word but because there are so many suggestions that need to be discussed, and put it "b" in comparison to the uncontroversial meaning of "our God" for which we have "a." Using these symbols, we have "YHWH is a; YHWH is b." By this we can see that the same subject (YHWH) is expressed in two different ways (a and b), a structure similar to Hebrew parallelism in which one idea is expressed in two different ways for different purposes.[40] If "a" and "b" are related to each other in signification, both as predicates of the subject YHWH, we might get close to the meaning of the unknow information "b" by moving from the known "a." If "a" is something about what or who YHWH is, for example, "b" would be concerned with information of the same category. It is unlikely, however, that the content of "b" is the same as that of "a" or the

[37] This translation is actually on Moberly's list of four translations of Deut 6:4 as the fourth one, only though that he does not discuss it separately but includes its discussion in his arguments against the interpretation of the first two words as subject and predicate, arguments that need to be reconsidered against the points made in our discussion.

[38] As is found in R. W. L. Moberly, 'Towards an Interpretation of the Shema,' in Christopher R. Seitz, Brevard S. Childs & Kathryn Greene-McCreight, *Theological Exegesis: Essays in honor of Brevard S. Childs*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998, 132f.

[39] As we saw, for those like Moberly who take the Hebrew word in a numerical sense, אחד tends to be the predicate, whereas for those like Tigay who take it in a relative sense, as a qualifying description of YHWH, "our God" is the predicate. See, e.g., Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 439, where he rejects a translation that has "one" as the predicate on the basis of his understanding of the meaning of אחד.

[40] For a brief introduction to Hebrew parallelism, see W. G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to its Techniques*, Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984, 114–59.

former is less than the latter in significance; they should be at least different in content, though may be the same or increased in significance. The question, then, is what YHWH would be other than "our God" that its declaration can be a ground on which to demand a total love for him. The best candidate, which will be proposed in the following discussion of the meaning of the "one," is something of "God of all peoples" or "God of the whole world."

If that is the case, then a better parallel to the syntax of "YHWH our God YHWH one" in Deut 6:4 than considered by Moberly would be that of "YHWH your God he [the] God" in Deut 7:9. The literal translation of the last word in the second verse is "the God" (הָאֱלֹהִים), which is normally used in a context in which YHWH is proclaimed as the true God.[41] Indeed, with or without the article (הָ), אֱלֹהִים means "God" as the subject of a singular verb.[42] Yet, when used with the article without appositives or descriptive phrases following, הָאֱלֹהִים needs to be understood as having a specified sense, like when followed by possessive pronouns or nouns like in "our/your/my God" or "God of Israel."[43] The question is whether there is a better sense for that than "God of all" or "God of all nations," as suggested above and explored below.[44] Here suffice it to look at 1 Kings 18, where the repeated "YHWH, he is [the] God" in verse 39 is a response to Elijah's challenge in verse 12, 'if YHWH is [the] God, follow him; but if Baal, follow him.'[45] In that sense, the "one" in Deut 6:4 and "[the] God" in Deut 7:9 (cf. 4:39) are mutually illuminating, both in syntax and semantics. Thus, with the help from the latter, we might paraphrase our translation of the former as "YHWH is our God; YHWH is God of the whole world." With this understanding of "one" in place, translations like (c)

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[41] Cf. R. L. Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and B. K. Waltke (eds), *Theological Wordbook of The Old Testament*, Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1980, 93.

[42] After considering 1 Kings 18 in a similar way to that presented below, MacDonald, *Deuteronomy*, 80 complicates the matter by suggesting a rendering of הָאֱלֹהִים as "God" while rendering אֱלֹהִים as "god" or "a god," appearing to show the limit of his interpretation of the oneness of YHWH in terms of uniqueness. In Genesis 1:1, for example, we have אֱלֹהִים, without the definite article, yet it does not help much to translate it as 'In the beginning [a] god created the heavens and the earth.' The result would be better if we keep the traditional rendering of אֱלֹהִים as "God" when used of YHWH and to understand הָאֱלֹהִים as having a specific connotation of God.

[43] It is notable that the Hebrew expression of "God of Israel" or "the God of Aram" does not have the article prefixed to אֱלֹהִים. Thus, in 1 Chr 29:10, we have יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אָבִינוּ, and, in Jdg 10:6, אֱלֹהֵי אֲרָם. without the article (הָ).

[44] A meaning that, otherwise, would be achieved by אֱלֹהִים in construct, without the article prefixed yet instead followed by appositives or descriptive phrases. Some examples given by Harris, Archer, Jr. and Waltke include "God of all the land" (Isa 54:5), "God of all flesh" (Jer. 32:27), "God of heavens" (Neh 2:4, 20), "YHWH, God of heavens" (Gen 24:7) and "God of gods and Lord of Lords" (Deut 10:17).

[45] In NRSV's translation of 1 Kg 18:39, "the LORD indeed is God," is slightly different from RSV's and most other versions' "the LORD, he is God." Perhaps, the difference indicates a decision that the old version is not sufficient. In my view, however, even the new version does not fully represent the delicacy that might be involved in the Hebrew expression "יְהוָה הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים."

on our list, "YHWH our God, he is one" or even "YHWH our God is one" would also be acceptable as the intended meaning.

7.1.2. The semantic

There are various suggestions concerning the meaning of "אחד" in Deut 6:4. Among them are the following five: "one" (numerical), "alone" or "only," "supreme" or "unparalleled," "unity" and "One" (nominal).[46]

One (numerical)

The first to consider is the interpretation of אחד in Deut 6:4 in the numerical sense of "one," and not two, three or many.[47] Most modern scholars are aware of the limit of this sense. As George Knight comments, 'It is only too easy in this scientific age to take for granted that its significance is exhausted when it is understood mathematically.'[48] 'It can,' Knight continues, 'and does represent the idea of mathematical oneness, but at the same time that of comprehensiveness.'[49] Yet it is not the numerical sense of אחד that Knight disapproves so much as the limitation or exhaustion of its meaning to that sense. Likewise, for Stephen Geller, the numerical sense of "one" is a least possibility as the meaning of אחד. He rather prefers a qualitative sense, as we will see, yet he also notices the irreducibility of the numerical by admitting that 'there is a tension between the two nuances.'[50] In modern context, then, it is arguable that while the meaning of אחד is not limited to a numerical sense of "one," that will remain as the basic sense of the word used in Deut 6:4, though whether it is restrictive or productive of other senses is another matter.[51]

It is not surprising, therefore, that Deut 6:4 has been the benchmark for Jewish and Christian arguments for monotheism. The *Shema*, as Tigay comments, 'became the preeminent expression of monotheism,' due to the word "אחד" whose numerical sense "one" makes it 'a suitable response to the many theological challenges that Jewish

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[46] A similar list of interpretations is found in MacDonald, *Deuteronomy*, 69f; Erik Waaler, *The* Shema *and the first commandment in first Corinthians*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008, 105, where the fifth meaning is simply a "name for God."

[47] Cf. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren (eds), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* Volume I, tr. John T. Willis, Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1974, 193f.

[48] George R. Knight, 'The Lord is One,' *Expository Times* 79, 1968, 8. Cf. also, Geller, 'God,' 290–302.

[49] Knight, 'The Lord,' 9.

[50] Geller, 'God,' 294.

[51] In the ancient world, as commonly known, numbers have special qualities, and the numerical "1" will be the official name of God in the end days, according to C. H. Gordon, 'His Name is "One",' *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 29, 1970, 198–9.

monotheism confronted throughout history.'[52] However, that is a general use of the *Shema*, and whether the meaning of the word "אחד" agrees with that use is a matter of discussion. Tigay himself is of the opinion that the *Shema* began as 'a declaration of allegiance rather than of monotheism.'[53] While we shall keep with the sematic investigation, there are two comments that can be made here about Jewish and Christian use of the *Shema* for a monotheistic argument. Firstly, as noted previously, in the *Shema* the word אחד ("one") is directly linked with "YHWH," and only indirectly with "God." An implication is that the primary purpose of the word in Deut 6:4 is perhaps not to do with "one God" in the sense of mono-theism. Tigay affirms, as noted above, 'the Shema is not a declaration of monotheism.'[54] Yet it is only because of the word אחד that normally means "one" in numerical sense that the *Shema* has come to be understood as a "preeminent" expression of monotheism and to be used as a "proper" response to various challenges to the theology understood that way. Secondly, if the *Shema* was indeed meant to be a statement of monotheism, meaning that there is only one God, YHWH, and no one else in the whole world, Christian theology would be among those challenges against which Tigay says the *Shema* was used in Judaism: 'in the face of Zoroastrian and Gnostic dualism it meant one, not two; in the face of Christian trinitarianism it meant one, not three; and in the face of atheism, one and not none.' [55]

Alone or *unique*

Tigay brings in a different kind of monotheism, close to monolatry or even henotheism, by interpreting Deut 6:4 as 'a description of the proper relationship between YHVH and Israel: He alone is Israel's God.'[56] This can be treated as a "weak" monotheism in which the existence of the other gods for other nations is neither denied nor approved, in comparison to a "strong" or "strict" monotheism according to which there is one God and no other gods exist.[57] The emphasis is rather that there is no other God *for Israel* but YHWH. In other words, 'Yahweh is the *one* and *only* God for *Israel*. … Yahweh is *'echadh*, "one," with regard to the one who is addressed, viz., "Israel." … As the God

[52] Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 440.
[53] Ibid. Tigay also informs that in an unpublished writing ('Why the Shema?') J. Satlow also observes, 'Deut 6:4–9 is a more suitable expression of Israelite belief than the Bible's explicit declarations of monotheism because it expresses the one God's connection to Israel as well as a fuller range of religious thought' (*Deuteronomy*, 531 n. 17).
[54] Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 76.
[55] Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 440.
[56] Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 76.
[57] Cf. MacDonald, *Deuteronomy*, 72.

whom Israel loves, Yahweh is Israel's *only one* and *unique one*.'[58] The sense of אחד corresponding to this interpretation is then "only" or "alone." Hence Tigay's translation: 'the LORD is our God, the LORD alone.'[59] One difficulty of this interpretation is, as noted by Tigay himself, that 'Hebrew normally expresses "alone" with *levad-*, as in "You alone [*levadekha*] are God of all the kingdoms of the earth" (2 Kings 19:15,19; cf. v. 19 and Ps.86:10).'[60] Another is that while it is possible to interpret אחד as "alone," that sense is otherwise unparalleled in the OT, as well pointed out by Moberly. He examines the five passages that are used in support of the interpretation of "one" as "alone,"[61] concluding that 'none of these is a clear example, and in all of them *'eḥad* probably retains its basic meaning of numerical singularity.'[62]

Moshe Weinfeld, for whom '*lĕbaddo* is an adverb and thus inappropriate in a nominal sentence,'[63] argues that the אחד in the *Shema* demands it to be understood as meaning "one," "sole," "single," even "exclusive." He likens the 'love of God with one's whole entity, to the exclusion of any rival to that love' to the 'love of a woman for her husband and of a father for his son.'[64] Whilst Weinfeld notes that there is no explicit notion of exclusiveness attested in the *Shema*,[65] as in other passages,[66] and that it is during the Exile that the monotheistic consciousness sharpened and came to full expression,[67] he argues, nevertheless, that the אחד statement of the *Shema* still implies monotheism. As such, coming to full expression of monotheism in the Exilic period does not mean that the concept of monotheism was created then.[68] There is no need to refute this because, as we saw, the numerical sense of אחד is in the *Shema* and it will remain so. The questions raised are whether aloneness or uniqueness is the primary sense of the "one" in Deut 6:4 and whether the meaning of אחד is limited to that sense in that context.

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[58] *TDOT*, vol. 1., 196. Cf. also, MacDonald, *Deuteronomy*, 84f, which interprets even Deut 4:35 and 36 in the same light.
[59] Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 76 and 439f.
[60] Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 439.
[61] Isa 52:2; Ezek 33:24, 37:22; Zech 14:9; 1 Chr 29:1, as cited by A. D. H. Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979, 176.
[62] Moberly, 'YHWH,' 77f.
[63] Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, 337f.
[64] Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, 350. Cf. also, M. Weinfeld, 'The Covenant of Grant in the OT and in the Ancient Near East,' *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 90, 1970, 184–203; W. L. Moran, 'The Ancient Near Eastern Background of Love of God in Deuteronomy,' *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 25, 1963, 77–87; and Y. Muffs, *Love and Joy: Law, Language and Religion in Ancient Israel*, New York and Jerusalem: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1992.
[65] Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, 338.
[66] E.g., Deut 4:35; Isa 44:6; 45:6, 14, 18, 22; 46:9; 1 Kgs 8:60; 2 Kgs 19:15, 19, as mentioned in Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, 349.
[67] Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, 349f.
[68] Ibid. As earlier literature he has in mind 1 Kgs 18:39; 2 Kgs 5:15; Deut 7:9; 10:17.

Weinfeld's answer is positive. Interestingly, however, his translation is close to translation (a), with "one YHWH,"[69] when his argument would rather go better with translation (c), with "YHWH alone." The reason of this choice is that the first two words YHWH and our God stand in apposition to each other and together constitute the subject, the same observation considered above in the discussion of the syntax. The question is how his choice of 'one YHWH' goes with the great emphasis he puts on monotheism, because the translation, "one YHWH," conveys an implication of the existence of many YHWHs.[70] Weinfeld says, 'whether the unity of YHWH in Deut 6:4 is intended to exclude the existence of local manifestations of YHWH's is a moot question.'[71] The reason is that 'this phenomenon is never brought up as an argument in the issue of unification of worship,'[72] and 'the fragmentation of YHWH into numerous deities is never explicitly recognized as a problem.'[73] Upon this notion of one YHWH in many manifestations, we can say that Weinfeld's monotheism has a conception of 'unity' that is not unitary but manifold. The problem for us is that his translation maintains that sense by altering a proper name (YHWH) into a common name. If his interpretation is correct we would have to conclude that there are two senses of אחד at work in the *Shema* ("sole" and "unity") and that the oneness of YHWH is affirmed not vis-à-vis other gods so much as in view of the manyness of local features of YHWH. While the former may be acceptable, providing the meaning of אחד is not limited to numerical oneness in its narrowest sense, the latter can hardly be adequate in the context of Deuteronomy.[74]

Supreme

A qualitative sense of אחד is introduced by Geller who interprets its use in Deut 6:4 as 'supreme' or 'unparalleled.'[75] As he argues, against monotheistic interpretations, '*'eḥād* does not, in fact, bear this meaning ["alone"], for which there is in Hebrew a perfectly good term, *lĕbaddô*.'[76] Geller does not substantiate his argument, while there are others

[69] Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, 337.
[70] For a short treatment of the idea of YHWHs of many places (YHWH of Samaria, YHWH of Teman, etc.), see also Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 439.
[71] Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, 350.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid. Cf. S. Dean Jr., McBride, 'The York of the Kingdom: An exposition of Deuteronomy 6:4–5,' *Interpretation* 27, 1973, 295.
[74] See Geller, 'God,' 290f.
[75] Geller, 'God,' 290–302. There are only two nuances in Geller's consideration: numerical and qualitative. This leads him to treat "alone" as a numerical sense. Although he shows awareness of the difference in nuance between them as in "He is one" and "He is alone," this remains only implicit and is not actually taken into account in his discussion.
[76] Geller, 'God,' 290f.

who include 'alone' among the senses of אחד.[77] Besides, as noted previously, '*lĕbaddo* as an adverb would be inappropriate in a nominal clause.[78] There are two examples Geller uses for his argument, which however do not appear to support his interpretation. In the case of 2 Samuel 7:22 (גּוֹי אֶחָד בָּאָרֶץ),[79] while the sense of "supreme" may be implicit for YHWH, as for the nation "one" or "only" appears to sit there more comfortably than "supreme." Within the Deuteronomist context, at least, YHWH did not go out to redeem Israel through great and awesome wonders because Israel was the most supreme and best of people.[80] The verse can be better used as an example showing a use of אחד in numerical sense, involving neither an exclusion of the existence of other peoples nor an implication that Israel is 'the only people in the world.'[81] In the second case, Song of Songs 6:9 (אַחַת הִיא יוֹנָתִי תַּמָּתִי אַחַת הִיא לְאִמָּהּ), Geller interprets אחד in terms of 'unique, supreme, the best.'[82] Moberly and MacDonald appeal to the same text for a similar interpretation.[83] The problem is that Geller understands it also in the sense of 'one and only, beloved.'[84] The question here is not whether אחד can have both meanings or not, but whether such senses as "unique," "only" and "beloved" can be better grouped with "supreme" or with "alone" or "one." If the latter is the case, as it appears, Geller has weakened his own argument against monotheistic interpretations.

Yet Geller introduces another sense of אחד by saying that 'under the guise of declaring God's oneness, what is also, or really, being demanded is that one achieve unity of the self, both of one's mind ("heart," *lēb*) and one's appetites/emotions/life (*nepeš*), through singular attachment to God.'[85] The point gets clearer with his further comments that 'covenant religion is premised on a new, unitary view of the individual' and that 'the one self needed a single God to comprehend itself by projecting itself onto that new

[77] Cf. *TDOT*, vol. 1., 194; Knight, 'Lord,' 8.
[78] Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, 235f.
[79] The reference should be corrected to 7:23, not 7:22.
[80] See, for example, Deut 7:7–8 and 9:4–6 where it is explicitly stated that YHWH did not choose Israel because they were more numerous (or, by implication, greater or stronger) than other peoples or because of Israel's righteousness, but on account of his promise to Abraham and the wickedness of the great and strong nations of the land. To be sure, Israel is sometimes referred to as a "supreme" or "great" nation by other nations or by herself (e.g. Deut 4:6, 7; 26:5). For two reasons, however, they cannot be taken to be supportive of Geller's using of 2 Sam 7:23 for his interpretation of the *Shema*. On the one hand, the Hebrew word used in them is not אחד but גדול. On the other, in almost all cases, Israel sees other nations as "greater," "larger" and "stronger" (e.g. Deut 4:38; 7:1, 17; 9:1; 11:23, to name a few around the *Shema*).
[81] As it concerns Geller, for whom his 'the one people of the earth' is equivalent to "the only people in the world" here. Cf. 'God,' 291.
[82] Geller, 'God,' 292.
[83] Moberly, 'Interpretation,' 132; MacDonald, *Deuteronomy*, 74.
[84] Geller, 'God,' 293.
[85] Geller, 'God,' 295.

concept of divinity. The great individual, the true personality of the Hebrew Bible, is God, a self whose unity also allows great complexity, just as the newly apprehended unity of the human self did.'[86] Now, maintaining focus on semantics, we have three senses of אחד at work in Geller—"supreme," "single" or "unitary" and "unity that allows complexity." Again, the question is not whether the Hebrew word אחד can have different senses, but how such distinct senses can be considered as the meaning of the word used once in a single passage and whether Geller has a conception whereby to have them all.

Unity

As the meaning of אחד, Janzen considers a different kind of unity than we saw in Geller, that is, "a moral unity." He summarises various construals of the word in two kinds: (a) it says something about Israel's God *in se*; or, (b) something about the claim of this God upon Israel. The former goes with the interpretation of Deut 6:4 as containing an affirmation to Israel about what or who YHWH is (e.g., "YHWH is one"), while the latter goes with a claim upon Israel for exclusive covenant loyalty to YHWH (e.g., "YHWH is our God, YHWH alone").[87] Janzen posits that 'the claim upon Israel to love Yahweh its God with all its heart and soul and strength follows upon an affirmation to Israel that Yahweh is *'eḥād*, "one".'[88] In other words, 'the demands of the covenant are rooted in the affirmation of the identity and character of the God who establishes the covenant.'[89] Janzen refers to Patrick Miller's saying, 'it is as the God who sets an afflicted and enslaved people free that the Lord creates and claims a relationship with the people.'[90] Thus, for Janzen, the "YHWH one" refers to YHWH's 'integrity or a moral unity'—a 'unity between desire and action, between intention and execution.'[91] This unity, understood in the sense of 'fidelity' and 'integrity,' according to Janzen, becomes a burning issue under the vicissitudes of Israel's history, creating a crisis within Israel—a crisis that can be resolved either to a turn to other gods or a re-affirmation of the unity. 'It is as one such re-affirmation that we are to hear the word,

[86] Geller, 'God,' 302.
[87] Janzen, 'Most,' 280.
[88] Janzen, 'Most,' 281.
[89] Janzen, 'Most,' 281f. To put in a fuller form, the "identity" of Israel's God is the ground of the "redemption" of Israel from Egypt which, in turn, is the ground of the "covenant" at Sinai.
[90] Miller, 'Most,' 20, as cited in Janzen, op. cit. 281. Emphasis added.
[91] Op. cit. 287, 291. In the absence of more immediate and direct evidence, Janzen appeals to a number of texts outside Deuteronomy in order to support his interpretation. The major texts surveyed include (1) Exod 3, 22–23; (2) Num 13–14; (3) Hos 1, 11; (4) Job 23:13–14; (5) Jer 32:38–41; and, from within Deuteronomy, Deut 7:4, 9.

"Yahweh *'eḥād*",'[92] that is, 'faithful [or consistent, or "integrous", if there were such a word].'[93] One difficulty with Janzen's interpretation is how to reconcile his understanding of the אחד in the *Shema* and his explanation of it. That is, while he understands the "YHWH one" as saying something about Israel's God *in se* ("unity within himself"), he explains that in terms of character or attribute ("fidelity" or "integrity").

Jeff Benner presents another approach worth considering at this point when discussing the category of unity.[94] Holding that אחד is one of the Hebrew words whose Hebraism have been lost through its translation into the English "one," Benner turns for its original meaning to the imagery of its parent root (*ḥd*)—a tent "wall" and "door," explaining that the wall "separates" a tent into two parts while the door "unties" the separated parts.[95] From this Benner draws out the senses of "separation" and "unity," saying 'those that are separated come together in unity.'[96] He then argues that the אחד in Deut 6:4 is better translated as "unity" than "one," 'unity within himself' meaning 'an infinite God that can manifest in many ways, all of which are in unity.'[97] This sense of unity appears to be closer to answering the question as to who or what YHWH is than Janzen's unity as fidelity, though the latter appears to be better in relation to what follows in Deut 6:5. The question here is whether the word "unity" is suitable for expressing the meaning of אחד that is explicated by Benner as a concept encompassing both senses of "separation" and "unity." If unity is used in a narrow sense that stands next to that of separation it would not be suitable for the purpose intended by Benner as the meaning of אחד. If, on the other hand, used in a broader sense encompassing both separation and unity then what we have would be another example of using the concept of unity twice for different purposes. Even if such a problem be taken out of consideration it is still questionable whether "unity within himself" can be a ground for such an exclusive loyalty as described in Deut 6:5.

One (nominal)

Cyrus Gordon offers an interesting suggestion that אחד is a Hebrew name of a particular

[92] Janzen, op. cit. 282.
[93] Janzen, op. cit. 291.
[94] J. A. Benner, *His Name Is One, Zechariah 14:9: An Ancient Hebrew Perspective of the Names of God*, College Station, TX: Virtualbookworm.com, 2002, 23.
[95] Benner, *Name*, 20–3.
[96] Benner, *Name*, 23.
[97] Benner, *Name*, 24.

deity that other nations also had in different names.[98] According to a common belief among Hebrews, Greeks and other Near Easterners, Gordon explains, God was "One" or there was a god called thus. In Mesopotamia, the "One" (written ^{d} *I*), fitting into a pattern of deities corresponding to numbers, can designate the god of heaven "Anu."[99] In Egypt, 'the great god Amon-Re, Lord of the Universe, was called *w*^{c} *w*^{c} (literally "one, one") "the one 'One'".'[100] In Greece, Xenophanes identified '[the] God (ὁ θεός)' with '[the] One (τὸ ἕν),' Parmenides refined the concept, and the Pythagoreans made much of the link between numbers and qualities. A detailed discussion of the matter in Plotinus' *Enneads* has the opening statement that "all things that exist are extant by reason of the One".'[101] Gordon applies the same perspective to interpreting the three occurrences of "אחד" related to YHWH in the Hebrew Bible: Deut 6:4; Zech 14:9; Job 23:13.[102] As for the first, he says, 'it is quite possible that אחד means not only that there is but one God, but also that his name is אחד "One".'[103] He goes on to say that 'the numerical אחד "1" will be the official name of God in the End of Days.'[104] For Gordon, therefore, אחד is the name of God for the Hebrew as *to hen*, *w*^{c} and ^{d} *I* are for the Greek, the Egyptian and the Mesopotamian respectively. If Gordon is correct it would be necessary to translate אחד as "One."

This suggestion, despite general atmosphere of indifference and dismissal,[105] makes a good sense within the context of the three Hebrew texts considered by him. If, that is to say, "One" is a name for God who was well known to the first audience in the sense suggested by Gordon, the linking of YHWH with that name would fit well with the notions that YHWH is the king of the whole world (Zech 14); that he is in a position to demand his people to love him with all their heart, soul and might (Deut 6); and that no one can dissuade him (Job 23).[106] My concern is only with Gordon's account of the relation of the divine names expressed in his saying, 'This is the plain sense of the

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[98] Gordon, 'Name,' 198–9.
[99] Gordon, 'Name,' 198.
[100] Gordon, 'Name,' 199.
[101] Gordon, 'Name,' 198. Cf. Plotinus, *Enneads* VI. 9. 'On "The Good" or "the One."'
[102] Gordon's translation 'Since He is "One," who can thwart Him?' takes the "ב" of "בְּאֶחָד" as the "ב of predication or equivalence," as he also finds it in Ps 68:5; Isa 26:4; and Exod 6:3. 'Name,' 198 n.1.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Cf. Moberly, 'YHWH,' 76 n. 7; Macdonald, *Deuteronomy*, 70; Waaler, *Shema*, 102; and D. J. A. Clines, *Job 21–37*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006, 579.
[106] Many commentators, including Pope (mentioned by Gordon) and Clines (rejecting Gordon's suggestion), prefer to amend והוא באחד to וְהוּא בָּחַר. Clines' translation 'If he has decided' might make a better sense than Gordon's 'Since God is One,' yet the latter has the advantage that it does not have to change the wording of the Masoretic Text, over the former which not only needs an emendation but also it needs to find a parallel in which בחר is used in the sense of "determine" without an object following.

passage [Zech 14:9], and must in any case be correct because *God has not one but many names such as El, Elohim, Yahweh, Yah, Adonai, Shaddai, etc*.'[107] The problem is that if YHWH is a name of God, and אחד is another name of the same God, as argued by Gordon, the phrase "God is YHWH" or "God is One" would be more commonly appearing than the phrase "YHWH is God"[108] or "YHWH is One."[109] The point is not to disregard Gordon's discovery of the existence of the common name "One" in the ancient world but to highlight that there should be a better way to make sense of it than interpreting that there was one and the same God who had different names among nations, such as El, Elohim, Yahweh, Adonai, Shaddai, Baal, Anu, Amon-Re, etc., and One. Such a notion fails to do justice to the significance of the name "YHWH" for the Israelites in comparison to other names,[110] let alone the biblical stress on the difference of the being of YHWH from that of other gods.[111]

What Gordon's comparative study suggests other than his own is an interpretation of the אחד ("One") in Deut 6:4 as a general noun like the word "God" yet having a specified sense as Gordon found in the names of the gods of Israel's neighbours, that is, "God of heaven," "Lord of the universe," or "the one One." There are further grounds, in addition to those considered thus far, on which this interpretation can stand. First, it is not reasonable to think that by אחד Moses and Zechariah are referring YHWH to a "particular" deity that is also known in other nations by different names, especially the former in the context demanding of Israel an exclusive and wholehearted love for her God and the latter in an eschatological vision of the kingdom of Israel in which YHWH will be [the] king of the whole world. However, secondly, it is difficult to think that in the examples discussed above, especially in Deut 6:4, the meaning of אחד is meant to be "mysterious" or "obscure." Being as it may, it is equally possible that the meaning was too "obvious" to the first audience to require an explanation.[112] Thirdly, whatever is meant by "יהוה אחד" (YHWH one), its meaning must be as significant enough to be the basis of the demand for a total loyalty, along with the idea expressed in the phrase or

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[107] Gordon, 'Name,' 198. Emphasis added.
[108] Cf. For "YHWH is God," Josh 22:34; Deut 4:35; 1 Kgs 18:21, 39; 2 Kgs 19:15; Ps 100:3; Jer 10:10 et al. In a monotheistic faith, "YHWH is God" would be the same in meaning as "God is YHWH," except that "God" is still more general in signification than "YHWH."
[109] The three examples considered by Gordon all have 'YHWH is One" rather than "God is One."
[110] Cf. Werner H. Schmidt, *The Faith of the Old Testament: A History*, tr. John Sturdy, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983; Mark S. Smith, *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel*, San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990.
[111] Cf. Exod 15:11; Deut 3:24; 10:7; 2 Kgs 8:23; Neh 9:6; Ps 18:31; 136:2–3 et al. See also above.
[112] '[T]he repeated calls to hear or read or obey what is written presuppose that what is written is intelligible' (D. A. Carson, *Collected Writings on Scripture*, Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010, 180).

statement “YHWH [is] our God,” and much more so if the two words of the latter are appositional. Numerical singularity, relative uniqueness, qualitative supremacy, or ontological unity all can be the basis, yet none of them alone is as strong enough to further the import of “YHWH [is] our God” as the “One” understood as a general noun for God with a specified sense such as “God of the universe,” “King of the world,” “Lord of all nations,” and the like.

7.1.3. Conclusion

Our discussion of the syntactical and semantics of Deut 6:4 indicates that translation (d), “the LORD is our God, the LORD is One,” is the most likely among the four on the list given previously, though least popular among scholars and commentators. This translation maintains the word “one” (אחד) in parallel to the word “our God” (אלהינו), sharing a common subject by YHWH. An implication is that the first word (“one”), whatever it means, needs to be grammatically nominal, syntactically predicative, semantically relevant to the word “our God” yet different in signification, and contextually part of both the object of the injunction to hear and of the ground of the demand for a total love for YHWH. The best candidate that meets such requirements is “God of the world” or “God of all peoples,” corresponding to “our God,” i.e., “God of Israel.” That is a sense that is also mentioned by most NT scholars, as we will see soon, only though they draw out the universal concept from the numerical sense of “one.” That opens three possibilities to consider as we move onto the discussion of the *Shema* in the NT, in relation to the conclusion that is drawn above: (1) that our conclusion is mistaken, because even the NT writers used the “one” language of the *Shema* in a numerical sense, and that is in fact the sense in which the word was used in the original context, whatever one might to say otherwise; (2) that our interpretation of Deut 6:4 is correct, but the NT writers used it in their own ways; and (3) that the NT writers were actually using the *Shema* in a sense being suggested in this study.

7.2. The *Shema* in the NT

While we shall see some of the passages in the NT that are commonly treated as having a connection with the *Shema*,[113] it is notable that each of them comes in its own complexities. Gal 3:20, for example, while considered to have allusion to the Deut 6:4,

[113] It is not within the purpose of this study to examine all the passages in the NT that might be related to the *Shema*. For a comprehensive study, cf. Birger Gerhardsson, *The Shema in the New Testament: Deut 6:4–5 in significant passages*, Lund: Novapress, 1996. A summary of this through work is found in Waaler, *Shema*, 208–16.

has been given more than 300 interpretations.[114] 'It is perhaps ironic,' comments Suzanne Nicholson, 'that a text describing God's oneness should have innumerable interpretations.'[115] Part of the complexity, I suppose, is to do with some apparent mismatches between the words in the OT texts and the NT and exegetical failures to pay due attention to them. One is a difference noted previously, that while NT writers speak always of "one God," the word "one" in the OT (Deut 6:4 and Zech 14:9) is directly connected to "YHWH (or LORD)," and only indirectly to "God (or our God)."[116] In other words, while the word "one" in the OT texts is used of YHWH (the LORD), the NT texts considered to have resemblance to the words of Deuteronomy and Zechariah uses the "one" language for "God" rather than "Lord." Another is that, in the OT, "one" is a complement that predicates of "YHWH" but, in the NT, "one" is mostly an adjective that qualifies "God." The third is that while the established theology of the OT is that according to which YHWH (the LORD) is God and vice versa, the NT has a theology according to which God (the Father) is distinct from the Lord (Jesus Christ). These differences, despite their significance for further investigation, tend to fail to be noticed by scholars assuming that the *Shema* is a statement of "monotheism" and it is used by the NT writers in that sense.[117] The first assumption was addressed in the previous section, with the conclusion that, in whatever way Judaism and Christianity might have used the *Shema*, the word "one" in Deut 6:4 itself is better understood as a nominal term, specifically referring to the "God of the whole world," than in a mono-sense like "alone" or "one." It is the second assumption to which we now turn, and the question is how and in what sense the *Shema* is used in the NT.

7.2.1. Mark 2:7, James 2:19, 1 Timothy 2:5 and 6:15

These passages are selected for introducing the question raised above without going into much detail over exegetical matters. One is Mark 2:7, "… He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?" (NASB).[118] The Greek structure (εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ θεός) is a preposition followed by a nominal phrase with no "to be" verb in them, thus

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[114] Cf. Ernest de Witt Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1980, 191.
[115] Nicholson, *Dynamic*, 105.
[116] An exception is the observation of Eric Peterson, taken up by Anthony J. Guerra, 'The One God Topos in *Spec. Leg.* I.52.,' in David Lull (ed.), *Society of Biblical Literature 1990 Seminar Papers*, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990, 148–57; *Romans and the Apologetic Tradition: The purpose, genre and audience of Paul's letter*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, which will be discussed later.
[117] Many scholars, including Dunn, *Paul*, 31–33, Wright, *New Testament*, 248; and Bauckham, *Jesus*, 96.
[118] For a link between this and the *Shema*, see J. Marcus, 'Authority to forgive sins upon the Earth: The Shema in the Gospel of Mark,' in W. R. Stegner and C. A. Evans (eds), *The Gospels and the Scriptures of Israel*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994, 198.

grammatically controlling εἷς ὁ θεός not to be translated as a clause like "but God is one" but rather as a phrase like "but the one God" or "but God alone."[119] The last is the translation preferred by most English translations, yet it needs to be noted that "but God alone" corresponds better with "εἰ μὴ μόνος ὁ θεός" in Luke 5:21. It is indeed arguable that *heis* and *monos* are interchangeable in meaning "alone," and Luke chose the latter only because it is more precise in delivering the common sense.[120] Even that is, however, a recognition that there is a difference in nuance between the two words.[121] To be precise, therefore, something essential to the textuality of Mark could be lost if the words of Luke 5:21 are brought in for translating the words of Mark 2:7. Matthew, interestingly, has neither *heis* nor *monos* in reporting the same event but only 'this man is blaspheming,' without the question following, "who can forgive sins but …" (9:3). Perhaps, as commonly noted, '"this man is blaspheming" contains the same unavoidable implication.'[122] Be that as it may, it remains that Matthew does not provide a clue about how to interpret εἷς ὁ θεός in Mark 2:7.[123] Thus, given the differences between the Synoptic parallels, it is recommendable to maintain Markan terminology by "but *the one God*," rather than glossing it over by "but *God alone*." The reason is that while the former leaves room for a further investigation into its meaning, the latter will in effect close the door to any more enquiries.

An additional passage to consider is Jas 2:19, "You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder" (NASB).[124] "God is one" is one way of translating the Greek sentence εἷς ἐστιν ὁ θεός,[125] and another is "there is one God."[126] Both deliver a monotheistic sense, yet there is a difference in that while the latter limits the sense to monotheism, the former leaves open a possibility that the word "one" can have more than a numerical sense. That said, against a common understanding of the expression "God is one" as a "monotheistic" statement,[127] one might ask why or on

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[119] Cf. Mark 10:18, for the same syntax and words in Jesus' mouth.
[120] Marcus, 'Authority,' 197f, as noted by K. H. Tan, 'The Shema and Early Christianity,' *Tyndale Bulletin* 59 (2), 2008, 201. While making an interesting observation that in neither Mark 2:7 and 10:18 is the word εἷς really necessary for the sense "except God," and asking an important question of why Mark has the word in the two places, he answer is rather disappointing: 'because it is the key-word of the *Shema*.'
[121] While "alone" is the sole meaning of *monos* (μόνος), both as adjective and adverb, *heis* (εἷς) has the meaning of the numerical "one" also and others.
[122] Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, Dallas: Word, 1993, 233.
[123] Hagner, rather, draws the sense of blasphemy in Matthew from the rhetorical question in Mark 2:7b, rendering it as 'who is able to forgive sins but God alone?'
[124] For this passage being connected to the *Shema*, see Ralph P. Martin, *James*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2010, 77.
[125] Cf. ASV, RSV and ESV.
[126] Cf. KJV and NIV.
[127] E.g., Martin, *James*, 77.

what ground we are then to think the demons believe and shudder at God being one ("one" in the numerical sense). The question is whether it is not more reasonable to think that the demons shudder because they know the identity of the one they face rather than because they know God is one in number or there is only one God in the world.[128] The two are closely related, and the latter is not implausible, yet notable is that demons' responses described in other places of the NT are usually concerned with the identity of the one confronting them.[129] In Mark 5, for example, a man with an evil spirit, comes to Jesus to plead with him not to torment him, calling Jesus, "the Son of the Most High God" (v 7), using the title "the Most High" (ὑψίστος, עֶלְיוֹן) which indicates "the Sovereign God over all things" or "El Elyon presiding over other gods in the heavenly council.'[130]

1 Tim 2:4 appears to be an example in which the oneness of God is most likely expressed in a numerical sense. That said, it needs to be noted that for this verse most Greek manuscripts have the article ὁ missing (εἷς γὰρ θεός), unlike other εἷς ὁ θεός texts, thus English translations unified with "For there is one God." An implication is that this example is not to be treated as the same as the other examples with the definite article without a qualification. A similar numerical notion of oneness is expressed in 1:17 by "*only* God" (μόνῳ θεῷ) and in 6:15 by "the blessed and *only* Ruler" (ὁ μακάριος καὶ μόνος δυνάστης). Two subtleties draw attention, however. Firstly, the Greek word translated as "only" or "one" is μόνος rather than εἷς, confirming the observation made above that the former word is more precise in expressing the notion of numerical oneness or relative aloneness. Secondly, however, the phrase "the blessed and only Ruler" is followed by "the King of kings and Lord of lords,"[131] which are titles that were considered in the previous discussion as the possible meaning of the *Shema* "One." What we have in this passage then is an example showing that "one God," even in the sense of "only God," has the connotation of God of the world, 'a mighty and transcendent God.'[132]

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[128] Cf. Martin, *James*, 89, which notes that '[t]he demons express a belief in the divine elsewhere in the NT (Mark 1:24; 3:7; Acts 16:17; 19:15) and exhibit fear before God as they confront Jesus (Mark 1:23, 24; 5:7), usually in the stories of exorcisms (BGD, 866). … demons react to the divine numen (*1 Enoch* 13.3; 69.1,14).'

[129] E.g., Mark 1:23–24, Acts 16:17 and 19:15.

[130] Cf. Bauckham, *Jesus*, 115f and 118f. For the divine council, cf. Deut 32:8–9, Ps 97:9 and 82:6, as mentioned by Bauckham.

[131] Titles used for both YHWH (Deut 10:27; Ps 136:2–3) and Jesus (Rev 17:14; 19:15).

[132] William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, Dallas: Word, 2000, 361.

7.2.2. Romans 3:29–30[133]

Paul asks, in verse 29, "Is God the God of the Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also?" Paul's answer to the question is "Yes, of Gentiles also." Paul continues to say, now in verse 30, "since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one" (NASB).[134] However this passage is translated, we can see that it envisages two relationships that God has with people on earth: God of Israel in relation to the Jews; and God of the world in relation to the whole world, including both the Jews and Gentiles. Paul's point is that God, being one, has a common way, faith, by and through which he will justify the Jews and Gentiles. Most interpreters surveyed for this study derive the universal aspect from the phrase "εἷς ὁ θεὸς" by translating as "God is one" and understanding the word "one" in the sense of "alone" or numerical "one."[135] While this will be discussed below in more detail, the question here is whether that is how Paul also reasons in our passage, drawing out a concept of divine universality from the numerical oneness of God as the meaning of the "one" in the *Shema*, or whether Paul appeals to the "one" language because it already contains a universal element. The former is most preferred but, nonetheless, the latter is more likely to be the case, if seen from the perspective achieved in the previous discussion of the theology of the *Shema*. With that possibility in mind, let us take following considerations of our passage to see whether we come to the same conclusion as the previous one.

The first is concerned with a grammatical difficulty with which to demarcate the subject of the clause led by the first word εἴπερ. If the word functions to introduce 'the necessary and sufficient condition for the affirmation just made,'[136] what follows it must contain a reason or ground for Paul's case that God is the God of Gentiles also. That being so, though, it is difficult to demarcate the subject of the clause led by the

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[133] This passage is commonly regarded as a *Shema* text in the NT. Cf. C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Epistle to the Romans*, volume 1, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975, 221f; J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, Waco, TX: Word Books, 1988, 189; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 365; Moo, *Romans*, 251f; T. R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998, 205; A. J. Hultgren, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011, 172. Cf. also, N. A. Dahl, 'The One God of Jews and Gentiles (Romans 3:29–30),' in his *Studies in Paul: Theology for Early Christian Mission*, Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1977, 178–91.

[134] With one or two minor differences, Greek manuscripts run like this: εἴπερ εἷς ὁ θεὸς ὃς δικαιώσει περιτομὴν ἐκ πίστεως καὶ ἀκροβυστίαν διὰ τῆς πίστεως. The version is named to indicate that the translation represents one way of understanding the Greek text and there are others, without a commitment to the translation. Yet, for the same rendering as given above, see Nanos, *Mystery*, 181; R. W. Thompson, 'The Inclusion of Gentiles in Rom. 3.27–30," *Biblica* 69, 1988, 545f.

[135] Cf. Dahl, 'One,' 191; Dunn, *Romans*, 189 and 193; Schreiner, *Romans*, 205; Bauckham, *Jesus*, 96.

[136] Dunn, *Romans*, 189.

conjunction, unlike in 8:9 and 17, especially because of the lack of a "to be" verb linking εἷς and ὁ θεὸς and the presence of a relative pronoun ὃς. There are two options available about what we have: either (1) a compound sentence made of two clauses linked by an independent relative pronoun ὃς, thus 'God is one, and he will justify …' (RSV) or 'there is only one God, who will justify …' (NIV); or (2) a clause with a descriptive relative pronoun standing between a compound subject and the predicate, like 'since it is the one God who will justify …" (KJV) or 'the God who will justify … is one" (NASB).[137] The first option is preferred by most scholars, yet it requires that a copular be inserted into the verbless phrase εἷς ὁ θεὸς.[138] For Bauckham, for example, such flexibility is possible because the form (εἷς ὁ θεός) is 'more or less standard' to the extent to be translatable just like the usual form with a "to be" verb (εἷς ὁ θεός ἐστι or εἷς ἐστιν ὁ θεός)[139] It is a flexibility, however, that is exercised to the degree that in Mark 2:7, as we saw, the same phrase (εἷς ὁ θεός) is translated as "God alone" by most versions that translate it here as a clause ("God is one" or "there is only one God").[140] In both places, thus, justice is not done properly to the actual form of εἷς ὁ θεὸς if it is a noun phrase as we saw in Mark 2:7. Therefore, as I argued previously regarding the Markan phrase, it would be advisable to apply the same rule to the translation of εἷς ὁ θεός here too, though the result may vary. A possibility is "since the One God [who] will justify both the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith." Alternatively, if εἷς ὁ θεός is indeed an abbreviated form of εἷς ὁ θεός ἐστι, with the "to be" verb implied, as in πιστὸς ὁ θεός in 1 Cor 1:9 ('God is faithful who …'), then we would have 'since God is one, who will justify …' (cf. Dunn), or 'God who will justify … is one" (NASB). The point is to maintain the whole verse as having one idea, rather than two,[141] and translate εἷς ὁ θεὸς in such a way that its interpretation is not predetermined to a numerical sense of the word "one" but has room for an appreciation of other senses. That is because if in this passage Paul indeed refers or alludes to the *Shema* in a positive sense, then there should be a correspondence between "one" here in Rom 3:20 and "one" there in Deut 6:4, and we have established that the latter "one" is not limited to a numerical sense.

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[137] Cf. Nanos, *Mystery*, 181; Thompson, 'Inclusion,' 545f.
[138] According to J. Lambrecht, '"is" must certainly be added in v. 30a since the grammatical function of "one" is that of predicate: "God is one."' ('Paul's logic in Romans 3.29–30,' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 119 (2000), 526). This grammatical argument needs to provide an explanation for the phrase εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ θεός in Mark 2:7; 10:18 because the application of the same rule to it would result in "except God is one."
[139] Bauckham, *Jesus*, 95.
[140] E.g., NIV, NRSV, NASB and ESV. While they all have "God only" for Mark 2:7, the latter three versions have "God is one" for Rom 3:30 and the first has "there is only one God."
[141] For discussion of this matter, see Lambrecht, 'Logic,' 527; Thompson, 'Inclusion,' 545f.

The second to consider concerns the observation mentioned previously that the word "one" in Deut 6:4 is directly connected to "YHWH" and only indirectly to "God." It is strange that most interpreters do not mention this or else treat it as a matter of difference in wording, arguing that what matters is not the exact wording but the general conception.[142] For Anthony Guerra, however, it is not an insignificant observation. Rather, 'it points us in the right direction as to the Hellenistic provenance of the "one God" formula.'[143] Moving in that direction, Guerra finds that the "One God" formula/topos, scant though in biblical and ancient Jewish literature, is amply documented in Hellenistic Jewish apologetic literature. His conclusion is that Paul's use of the "one God" language in our passage has no direct connection with the *Shema* but finds a direct parallel in 'Philo's apologetic employment of the "One God" topos for the purpose of including the Gentiles (proselyte) as equal members of the Jewish community.'[144] Be that it may, there is a problem that needs to be addressed by Guerra, namely an apparent disparity between the use of the "One God" in the Jewish apologetic literature used for his argument and Paul's. In the current passage, Paul uses the "one God" language for the case that God is not only God of the Jews but God of Gentiles also and Gentiles do not need to become Jews in order to be justified since God, being one, will justify them both by and through faith, not by the observance of the law given only to the Jews. On the other hand, the literature surveyed by Guerra, while corresponding better with Paul's language, nonetheless contains the use of the "one God" language 'to propagandize for the superiority of Mosaic legislation over all alternative religio-social-political worldviews.'[145] Thus, without a further consideration, it would be difficult to locate Paul's use of the "one God" language wholly in the context of the Jewish apologetic tradition. Of course, there are also other uses made of the "One God," as noted by Guerra himself, including 'to promote unity and equality between Jews and Gentiles as a direct implication of the affirmation of One God.'[146] Such a use, however, is still acceptable even within such a framework that understands the *Shema* as in these words: 'I am God over all that come into the world but I have joined by name only with you; I am not called the God of the idolaters, but the God of

[142] Cf. Schreiner, *Romans*, 205 n.9. This is a matter that is not mentioned by most commentator and scholars, including Dunn and Bauckham.
[143] Guerra, *Romans*, 84.
[144] Guerra, *Romans*, 101. Schreiner may be correct in dismissing Guerra's objection, yet Eric Peterson's observation used by Guerra remains, to repeat, that in Deut 6:4 "one" is used of "YHWH" and not "God," and that the *Shema* itself does not provide the formula that Paul uses in our passage.
[145] Guerra, *Romans*, 94.
[146] Guerra, *Romans*, 95.

Israel.'[147] This understanding is certainly conceivable within the framework of the *Shema* itself, and probably all the more so if the word "one" in it is taken in a numerical sense. Perhaps, living in the Hellenistic world, the Jewish apologists found the need to defend their theology (or an opportunity to promote it) by saying that the One (τὸ ἕν), the highest God even for the Greeks, is their God, YHWH. It is arguable, then, that while Paul's word may be more reflective of the language prevalent in the Jewish apologetic literature (one "God") than that of Deut 6:4 (one "YHWH"), we need to conclude that his conception of the one God is less of Hellenistic Jewish apologetics and more of the theology of the *Shema* itself. He must be appealing to an aspect of the *Shema* to correct a particular understanding that puts the Jews in a privileged position over Gentiles regarding justification.[148] The question is whether such a view is a correct understanding or misunderstanding of the *Shema* or even abuse of it. The former would be the case if the "one" in the Deut 6:4 really means "alone" or "one" in a numerical sense, because it says, "YHWH is one" or "YHWH is one YHWH," and not "one God" or "God is one."

The third consideration is concerned with the aspect of the *Shema* to which Paul is thought to be appealing for his case, that is, the universal aspect of God as Creator and Ruler.[149] 'The appeal,' says Dunn, 'in fact is to God as Creator, from one arm of the twofold dogma (God as Israel's Lord) to the other (God as Lord of all).'[150] Bauckham also speaks of the 'two aspects of the divine identity according to the Shemaʿ.'[151] To be precise, however, Deut 6:4 has "YHWH our God" and then "YHWH one," not "YHWH Lord of all" or "YHWH the Creator." Thus, if the "one"' in the *Shema* is not a name or title for God of the world, the universal aspect of God should be drawn by inference from the numerical oneness of YHWH. Thus, in Bauckham's words, 'since he is the one and only God there is, he must also be the God of Gentiles.'[152] For Paul, in other words, the "one" in the *Shema* means that there is only one God in the world and from that sense he draws the universal aspect of God. Interestingly, Bauckham takes Zech 14:9 as

[147] *Exodus Rabbah* 29 (88d), as cited by Guerra, *Romans*, 75.
[148] Dunn, *Romans*, 193, says that '"works of the law" signify that attitude which affirms that in effect God is only God of the Jews.' Cf. also, Mounce, *Pastoral*, 87: 'In Paul's day, sectarian Judaism emphasized "our" in an exclusive sense ….'
[149] According to Bauckham, *Jesus*, 7–11, "Creator" and "Ruler" are *the* markers of the unique identity of the true God, the God of all things.
[150] Dunn, *Romans*, 189.
[151] Bauckham, *Jesus*, 96.
[152] Ibid. Cf. also, Nanos, *Mystery*, 184.

envisaging 'a universalizing of the Shemaʿ,'[153] interesting because it appears to conflict with what he has previously explicated of the words of the *Shema*, now implying that the *Shema* itself does not have the idea of universality which is rather to be inferred from its words, as done by Zechariah and Paul.

In my view, however, there are some considerations that need to be taken by any attempt to draw universal aspects of God simply out of a numerical oneness. If, in the first place, there is only one God in the world and he is the God of Israel, YHWH, and that is the theological teaching of the *Shema*, Paul would have left some markers showing how he draws such a "radical conclusion"[154] as that Gentiles do not need to become Jews to be justified simply by referring or alluding to the *Shema*, because more logical a conclusion on such a condition would be that, to be justified, Gentiles need to keep the law given to the people of Israel by the only God. 'Gentiles will be accepted,' in other words, 'if they keep Torah precisely because there is only one God.'[155] In addition, Paul's use of εἷς ὁ θεός in verse 30 in the way discussed above does not support an interpretation that he is deliberately showing how he draws the universal aspect of God from the existence of the only one God in the world. Considering the "presuppositional" nature of the form taken by Paul, without using a "to be" verb yet as if using an established formula, as discussed above, it is more likely that Paul is simply appealing to the idea of "one God" for his argument because that is how he understands the meaning of the "one" in the *Shema*. Besides, given the semantic continuity between Deut 6:4 and Zech 14:9, noted by Moberly in that the latter is a citation of the former indicates, it is reasonable to use the latter in interpreting the former.[156] It is very likely, then, that the universal aspect of YHWH envisaged by the word "one" in Zechariah 14 is not something to be inferred from the word "one" of the *Shema* but already contained and clearly expressed in the word, and such is the meaning of the "one" God to which Paul appeals as the ground of the case that God is one, the God of the Jews and of Gentiles also, who will justify both the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. When, therefore, speaking of 'the *universalism* embedded in the

[153] 'All peoples,' that is to say, 'will be YHWH's peoples, all will love YHWH as the Shemaʿ requires, all will therefore worship him at Tabernacles, and all will receive the paradigmatic divine blessing on those who love him' (Bauckham, *Jesus*, 97).
[154] Ibid.
[155] Tan, 'Shema,' 196, in reference to T. L. Donaldson, *Paul and the Gentiles: Remapping the Apostle's convictional world*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997, 84–6. Whether this 'usual Jewish thought on universalism' is the correct understanding of the *Shema* or a misunderstanding is a matter of discussion, in comparison to Paul's argument for Gentiles. In either case, anyway, Paul is not drawing out a new idea from the *Shema* if he is saying what he believes it actually says.
[156] Moberly, 'YHWH,' 78 and 80.

monotheistic faith of Israel—for the One God of Israel was also the One God of the nations ("the Lord is *One*"),'[157] Nanos sails close to the argument being advocated in this study, certainly closer than anyone else, albeit hampering the process by the predetermined "monotheistic" emphasis. The point can be shown by slightly modifying his sayings about the one God, from the perspective being developed in this study, for example, 'he is also the One God of all creation'[158] to "he is also One, God of all creation," 'he is the One God of all the nations'[159] to "he is One, God of all the nations," and 'for the One God of Israel is equally the One God of all the nations that turn to him, or else he is the One God of Jews only (a denial of his oneness of all people created by him), and thus not really the One God of at all'[160] to "For the One of Israel is indeed the God of all nations that turn to him, or else he is the God of Jews only …, and thus not really the One at all."

There is no suggestion, here, that the God of covenant, revealed in concrete life situations, is an abstract entity. Rather, the hope is merely to support the point being made in this work, namely, that both aspects of particularity and universality are already explicit in the confession of the *Shema*, as Nanos demonstrates, the former in Deut 6:4b ('the Lord is *our God'*) and the latter in 6:4c ('the Lord is *One'*).[161] Yet, unlike Nanos and others, the universal aspect is not something to be inferred from the word "one," because different conclusions are to follow from the inference itself, as we can see in Nanos' observation of a contrast between Paul and Philo.[162] Therefore, unless the *Shema* has the universal aspect stated explicitly enough to be simply referred to for an argument, a simple appeal to it would not provide a direct support for Paul's case.[163] At least, we might say, the inference itself should go simultaneously with the pronunciation of the word "one." Otherwise, that is, if the numerical sense of "one" is the definite sense that only is explicit in the *Shema*, then those Jewish believers who insist on the

[157] Nanos, *Mystery*, 181.
[158] Ibid.
[159] Nanos, *Mystery*, 184.
[160] Nanos, *Mystery*, 186.
[161] Nanos' translations, with his emphasis. *Mystery*, 181.
[162] The contrast between Philo's concern not in the inclusion of the gentiles as gentiles in the people of God but gentiles who had become Jewish proselytes and Paul's concern for Jews as Jews and gentiles as gentiles under the rule of the One, the God of all the nations. Nanos, *Mystery*, 186.
[163] Thompson says, 'Monotheism alone was insufficient to lead to the idea of God's total lordship over the Gentiles' ('Inclusion,' 546), yet adds, rather unconvincingly, 'but if the monotheistic God justifies everyone by faith, then, of course, he is really the God of the Gentiles' (ibid). Dunn, *Romans*, 193, draws a similar conclusion about the oneness of God to Thompson's. Both are unconvincing, because even if the monotheistic God justifies everyone by works of law he would still be the God of the Gentiles, providing he is the one and only God.

necessity of keeping the law, even by Gentiles, are not, in fact, "compromising" the oneness of God,[164] but rather they are being "faithful" to its meaning. The reason is that if YHWH, as the God of Israel, was the only God in the world, as we considered, and that was Paul's theology, then no other being, divine or human, would be able to be added or included to that unique identity of God without raising a question about the nature of the being called "one," like the one that will be pursued in the next chapter as a way to answer the second question indicated at the beginning of this chapter.

7.2.3. First Corinthians 8:4–6

Most scholars and commentators consider this passage to have a connection with the *Shema* in one way or another.[165] Bauckham, for example, believes that 'Paul has the Shemaʿ in mind from the beginning of the chapter, for "loves God" in verse 3 is already an allusion to it.'[166] That being the case, there is some debate about whose position is being spoken of in this passage, though that is not our concern.[167] What concerns us here is a common "tendency" among the scholars, viz., to take the word "one" in verses 4 and 6 both in a numerical sense of "one" and that sense only. The argument being advanced in this thesis does not seek to challenge any notion of early Christian monotheism flowing from Second Temple Jewish monotheism in the first century.[168] The question, rather, concerns whether this tendency is justifiable against evidence of the text itself. To put forward my answer in advance, the two uses of "one" in verse 6 are doubtless used in numerical senses, yet "one" in verse 4 is better taken in a broader sense, such as that explored in our previous discussion of the meaning of the "one" in

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[164] Cf. Nanos, *Mystery*, 181, 182 and 184.

[165] F. Fisher, *Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*, Waco, TX: Word Book, 1975, 132; J. D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation*, London: SCM Press, 1980, 179–83; G. D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987, 415; L. W. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism*, London: SCM Press, 1988, 97; N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991, 127f; A. C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2000; D. E. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003, 375; J. A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *First Corinthians*, New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2008, 341; Bauckham, *Jesus*, 97–104; James F. McGrath, *The Only True God: Early Christian Monotheism in Its Jewish Context*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009, 38–42.

[166] Bauckham, *Jesus*, 100. Cf. also, Chris Tiling, *Paul's Divine-Christology: The Relation Between the Risen Lord and Believers in Paul, and the Divine-Christology Debate*, Brunel University: PhD Thesis, 2009, 60–88.

[167] Cf. Tiling, *Divine-Christology*, 67, which provides three views: (1) 1 Cor 8:4–6 is entirely reflective Paul's position; (2) 8:6 is Paul's response to the Corinthian position in 8:4; and (3) 8:6 is the Corinthian position to which Paul responds in 8:7.

[168] As Bauckham says, 'there is no good evidence for the idea that non-monotheistic forms of Israelite religion survived through the Second Temple period to be available to the early Christians' (*Jesus*, 95).

the *Shema*, that is, as a general term like the word "God" but with a specified sense like "God of all" or "God of the whole world."

It is difficult to deny that the sense of the "one" in verse 4 is numerical, not only because that is the most common sense of the word but also because that is how it is understood by most interpreters. That said, the following considerations can be made for the possibility that here too Paul is using the word "one" in the sense suggested in the previous discussions in relation to the "one" language in Deut 6:4 and in Romans 3:20. First, the apparent parallel structure between "no idols in the world" and "no god but one" indicates that, like the word "world," the word "one" may be meant as a general noun, thus translatable as "no god but One (or, no god but the One God)." On the other hand, secondly, if one still want to take the "one" in a numerical sense, then he or she would consequently have a conflict of identities of the one and only God known in Deut 6:4 (YHWH) and 1 Cor 8:6 (Father) or else have to identify YHWH and the Father, with the difficulties mentioned previously, particularly against most common observation of the identification of Jesus with YHWH.[169] Thirdly, however, such a conflict would not follow if the "one" is taken as a general term like "God," as suggested in our previous discussions. Fourthly, many interpreters explain verse 6 in terms of "bifurcation,"[170] "reformulation"[171] and even "mutation,"[172] yet, whatever these observations are meant to say, they can hardly be of the number "one" but rather of the thing or being counted or called "One" or its content. Such an observation, in other words, would be meaningless unless the "one" in verse 4 is a reference to a being that can bifurcate, because only an object or entity, rather than their amount or quantity, bifurcates. Think of a cell bifurcating into two; it is the "cell" and not the "a" of which the bifurcation happens. Thus, the only way to explain this observation of bifurcation in verse 6 would be to say that the being called one in verse 4 is of the nature that allows it to happen.[173] Finally, again in relation to verse 6, the "one" God in verse 4 cannot be merely numerical, because he is soon to be known to consist of "one" God and "one" Lord. One might ask whether it is not simply the "one God" in verse 6, excluding the

[169] Cf. D. B. Capes, *Old Testament Yahweh Texts in Paul's Christology*, Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1992, 186; Bauckham, *Jesus*, 101; C. Kavin Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology: The Lord in the Gospel of Luke*, Berlin et al: Walter de Gruyter, 2006, 218.
[170] Dunn, *Christology*, 180. Or, "modification in two ways," Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 342.
[171] Bauckham, *Jesus*, 97.
[172] Or, "adaptation" of the *Shema*, Hurtado, *One God*, 99. Cf. also, Dunn, *Paul*, 253, in which Dunn refers that perspective also to his *Christology*, 180; *Partings*, 180, 182; Wright, *Climax*, 114–8, 121, 128–32.
[173] It is interesting to note that while the Hebrew words for God (אֱלֹהִים) and Lord (אֲדֹנָי) are singular in reference when used of YHWH, grammatically they are both plural, the latter word literally meaning "my Lords" (only with *Kamatz* instead of *Patach*).

"one Lord," that refers to the "one God" in verse 4. That would maintain the numerical oneness of God, yet at the expense of making the nature of the "Lord" in verse 6 ambiguous, referring to a divine being, or a human, or something in between. The third option, namely, "Lord" as a title referring to a middle being between the divine and the human, like an angel,[174] may have little support from the Bible in which angels are clearly distinct from YHWH and Jesus.[175] The second might be given some biblical support,[176] yet "Lord" as a title referring to a human being goes against the general use of the word in the Bible.[177] We are, then, left with the first option, traditional and most likely according to the general use of the title "Lord" in both the OT and the NT. In that case, however, because in verse 6 one Lord Jesus Christ is distinct from one God the Father, the "one" in verse 4 needs to be a "category" that Jesus and the Father both belong to or share in. Perhaps, we might have to think of this as another example of a double use of a term that we saw in the use of the word "one" in the Bible and "being" in Gunton, now of the word "one" in reference to "God," one in a narrow sense as in verse 6 (one God the Father) and the other in a broader sense as in verse 4 (no god but One). What we have in verse 4 then is "One" God who is not only "one" in number but the being called "One."

As for verse 6, literally 'yet for us one God, the Father, from whom all things and we for him, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things and we through him,' many notice that here Paul is stating or doing something "unprecedented."[178] Yet, syntactically and terminologically, nothing here is new compared to the *Shema*.[179] What is new is

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[174] Cf. Margaret Barker, *The Great Angel: A Study of Israel's Second God*, London: SPCK, 1992, 3, 5 and ch.5, treating Jesus (Son of God, Messiah and Lord) as a manifestation of Yahweh (a son of God, manifested on earth in human form as an angel, before his fusion with El-Elyon). Cf. also, McGrath, *God*, 13, 56, 57 and 69, applying the language of "neither uncreated nor created" drawn from Philo's description of the Word (*Logos*) as "neither uncreated as God, nor created … but between the two extremities" to his explication of Jesus (Word, Lord, Messiah) as a middle figure that bridges the gap between the transcendent God and the creation.

[175] Cf. 2 Sam 24:17; Rev 22:6. Angels may do the work of the Lord (e.g., Num 20:16), even to the extent that it is difficult to know who is speaking or acting (e.g., Gen 16:7–13; 19:1, 15; 22:12–12), but the word "angel" (מַלְאָךְ, ἄγγελος) is itself a general noun and thus those called an angel, whether Michael in the OT and Gabriel in the NT, are never called "Lord."

[176] Cf. Rom 5:15; 1 Tim 2:5.

[177] Cf. of YHWH, Ex 34:23; Deut 3:24; Isa 30:15; Ezek 6:3 et al, and, of Jesus, Matt 16:16 and 26:63 (Mark 14:61; Luke 22:67, 70). As Donald Macleod says, 'for all the cultural streams which flow through the New Testament, *kurios* implied deity' (*Jesus Is Lord: Christology Yesterday and Today*, Feam, Ross-shire: Mentor, 2000, 52).

[178] Cf. E. Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, tr. G. W. Bromiley, London: SCM Press, 1980, 103; Dunn, *Christology*, 180; Wright, *New Testament*, 136; Waaler, *Shema*, 445f.

[179] 'The whole complex is a double nominal sentence, which needs no verbs in Greek, but which has to be rendered with verbs in English …' While this is what Garland says about 1 Cor 8:6 (op. cit., 343), it appears to throw some light back on the syntax of Deut 6:4, which we also understood in terms of a double nominal sentence.

rather to do with what comes into the syntax and terminology of Deut 6:4: (a) the "one God" identified as the Father;[180] (b) the "one Lord" identified as Jesus Christ;[181] and (c) descriptions unique to God the Creator now shared between one God the Father and one Lord Jesus Christ. The significance of these new elements in relation to those of the *Shema* has been understood in various terms, as we saw previously. Three suggestions, among others, can be considered here, that is, a "bifurcation" of the oneness of God,[182] an "addition" of the one Lord to the one God,[183] and an "inclusion" of Jesus in the unique identity of the one God.[184] The viability of the first interpretation requires, as discussed above, a condition that the divergence is that of the one "God" rather than simply from the "one" God. The second is the view held by McGrath against both the first and the third, according to which 1 Cor 8:6 is more likely to be 'a paraphrase of the Shema with an additional affirmation added alongside it' than 'a splitting of the Shema' to include Jesus Christ in the *Shema*.[185] That is to say, 'Paul uses a statement about one God, which is sufficient to reiterate the point of the Shema, and then goes further to talk about "one Lord".'[186] Three points can be briefly made about this interpretation. One is that while McGrath supports his argument by showing that the language of "one God" was a well-known way of summarising the *Shema*, he does so without providing an explanation of the difference of the "one God" language from that of the *Shema* itself in which it is YHWH who is one. This is problematic because it is equally possible that Paul is using the "one" language to challenge a narrow understanding of God confessed in the *Shema* or prevalent among his contemporary Jews. There is another difference that is not addressed by McGrath, despite its significance, namely that while the one God in the *Shema* is YHWH, as noted by McGrath himself,[187] the one God asserted by Paul is the Father. McGrath simply assumes their identification, yet such an identification needs to be shown rather than assumed. Thirdly, McGrath's treatment of the title "Lord" applied to Jesus as different from that applied to God in the *Shema*,[188] the latter in identification with God and the former as "God's supreme agent bearing his

[180] For the difference between God as father in the OT and the Father in the NT, see above n.12.
[181] Whether it is used as a proper name, or as a general title, as long as it is about God, the referent of "Lord/LORD" in the OT is always YHWH.
[182] Dunn, *Christology*, 180.
[183] McGrath, *God*, 39–42.
[184] Bauckham, *Jesus*, 101.
[185] McGrath, *God*, 40.
[186] Ibid.
[187] An observation made by McGrath for the reason why he thinks 'it would be very difficult for Paul to distinguish between "God" in the Shema as referring to the Father and "Lord" in the Shema as referring to the Son' (*God*, 39).
[188] McGrath, *God*, 39f.

name,"[189] does not agree with Paul's use of the title in general.[190] The third way is found in Bauckham, who disapproves the second by arguing that 'from the perspective of Jewish monotheism, he [Paul] would certainly be producing, not Christological monotheism, but outright ditheism.'[191] Bauckham concludes, 'The only possible way to understand Paul as maintaining monotheism is to understand him to be including Jesus in the unique identity of the one God affirmed in the Shemaʿ.'[192] It is questionable, however, whether such an inclusion is acceptable from the same perspective that dismisses the second suggestion for the reason of ditheism. Though, for Bauckham, it does not lead to ditheism because Paul includes Jesus in the identity of the one God by 'identifying Jesus as the "Lord" whom the Shemaʿ affirms to be one.'[193] On a deeper level, however, there is a problem that the word "Lord" is one of the two forms in which the proper name of the God of Israel is written (YHWH) and read (*adonai*). The difference remains, that the "Lord" read of YHWH in Deut 6:4 is a proper name, whereas the "Lord" applied to Jesus in 1 Cor 8:6 is a general noun like "God." Therefore, Paul's use of the Greek term (κύριος) does not necessarily mean that he had the proper name of the God of Israel in mind when saying "one Lord." Besides, the word "Lord" (*adonai*) used as a title in distinction from the proper name YHWH is abundantly found in the OT,[194] especially in Isaiah[195] and Ezekiel.[196] Another problem is to do with the place of "God the Father" in our passage. For, if Paul is in fact identifying "Jesus" with the "Lord" that is affirmed to be one in the *Shema*, then little room would be left for "God the Father." While, according to the *Shema*, YHWH (κύριος, Lord) is the God of Israel and one (whatever it means), what we have in this passage is not only the assertion that there is one God and there is one Lord, but also that the two are distinct, the God as the Father and the Lord as Jesus Christ. These problems, however, might be obviated, even within the framework of Bauckham's interpretation, if we take following considerations.

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[189] For this meaning, McGrath, *God*, 49, appeals to an extra biblical source, this time *Apocalypse of Abraham* 10:3, 8.
[190] For Philo's use of *kyrios* as referring to "God," see Waaler, *Shema*, 167f. For a different account of the use of *kyrios* for Jesus by Christians, cf. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *A Wandering Aramean: Collected Aramaic Essays*, Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979, 127–32; and idem, *To Advance the Gospel: New Testament Studies*, New York: Crossroad, 1981, 218–29, which suggests 'a *Gleichsetzung* of Jesus with Yahweh, a setting of him on par with Yahweh, but not an *Identifizierung*—because he is not ʾabbāʾ.' *Advance*, 223.
[191] Ibid. Bauckham does not provide information as to who holds this position.
[192] Ibid.
[193] Ibid.
[194] Cf. Gen 15:2; Ex 23:17; Deut 3:24; Jos 3:13; Jds 6:17; 2 Sam 19:28; 1 Kgs 8:53; Neh 10:29; Ps 69:6; 71:16; 73:28; 109;21; Jer 1:6; 2:22 et al; Amos 3:7; Obad 1:1; Mic 1:2; Hab 3:19; Zeph 1:7.
[195] Isa 1:24; 7:7; 30:15 et al, more than 30 times ("Lord YHWH" or "the Lord YHWH of hosts").
[196] Ezek 2:4; 3:11 et al, almost always when YHWH is referred to ("Lord YHWH").

Firstly, while 1 Cor 8:6 may be interpreted as including Jesus in the identity of the one God, the "one" God language can be understood as having a sense that is not limited to a number, as indicated by our discussion of verse 4. Secondly, if Paul is indeed including Jesus in the identity of the one God one would need to understand him as doing so, not by fully identifying Jesus with YHWH in all aspects of his being for Israel and the Jews, so much as by letting Jesus take possession of the place of the "Lord," without trespassing on the unique place of YHWH for Israel, while leaving the place of "God" with the Father. Therefore, thirdly, the novelty that this passage has in relation to the *Shema* needs to be located not simply in the inclusion of Jesus in the unique identity of the one God but, rather, in the change of the identity itself in content. Numerically and referentially, the one God from whom are all things and for whom we are is now the Father, not the LORD or of YHWH, but of Jesus Christ who is the one Lord through whom are all things and through whom are we. This is not something that can be achieved by simply rearranging the words of the *Shema* ("God," "Lord," "our" and "one") so much as an affirmation of the new identity of God and Lord as revealed in Jesus Christ through the old way prepared by the words of the *Shema* and the OT in general, just as the old identity was established by YHWH being God through the older way prepared in the ancient Near Eastern world.[197]

7.2.4. Conclusion

After our interpretation of the *Shema* and before our discussion of the *Shema* in the NT, three possibilities were postulated in relation to the preferred interpretation of the "one" in Deut 6:4. The conclusion we have reached is that (a) that the NT writers are using the "one" language in a numerical sense and (b) that they are misusing it contrary to its original use are less likely than (c) that they are in fact using the "one" language in the sense in which it is used in Deut 6:4, that is, in a nominal sense referring to "God of all" compared to "our God" or "God of Israel." This continuity in the use of the "one" language in the OT and the NT can be disrupted, as it has, by stronger emphasis on monotheism than required. Saying that does not necessarily imply that we need to reject or object an approach from the perspective of monotheism. It is said, rather, in order to point to a possibility that monotheistic concerns in the Bible as a whole are secondary or presuppositional, and even absent if in a bare mathematical sense of monotheism. The focal point is rather who the being called or even counted one is. Thus, in the OT,

[197] Cf. R. W. L. Moberly, *The Old Testament of the Old Testament: Patriarchal Narratives and Mosaic Yahwism*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992; Margaret Barker, *The Older Testament: The survival of themes from the Ancient Royal Cults in Sectarian Judaism and Early Christianity*, London: SPCK, 1987.

YHWH alone is the One, the Lord of Israel and the God of the world and, in the NT, the Father is God and Jesus is the Lord, together the One, or each the One in their perichoretic relatedness. The universal aspect of this One can be drawn, indeed, from the numerical oneness of God, yet it is the thesis of this study that that aspect is already existent in the word "one" of the *Shema* and the NT writers used the "one" language in the same spirit as in which it was first used in the OT, both numerically and nominally. Interestingly, though, the concept of "one" that is used most certainly in numerical sense in the NT (1 Cor 8:6) is the one used for saying something quite different from what is explicitly stated in the OT (Deut 6:4), *interesting* in that it suggests a need to recover focus on "being" (one "God"), and *hypostasis* (YHWH, Father, Jesus) for knowing that, from on number ("one" God or "one" Lord).

Chapter 8 Trinity and Being as Space

In the previous chapter, anticipating the discussion of this chapter, we looked at the *Shema* texts in the OT and in the NT, with the result of some interesting discoveries that the "one" language used of "YWHW" (LORD) in the OT is best understood in a nominal sense meaning "God of the whole world" and that it is in that sense that the "one" language used of "God" in the NT (and perhaps also in the Second Temple period Jewish literature) is better understood than simply in a numerical sense. The present study is not in the position to consider whether these discoveries are *the* correct interpretation of "one" language in the Bible. Nonetheless, however, they have been pursued to such an extent as done in the previous chapter because it is only upon them that the following answers can be offered to the two questions that initially precipitated them. The first is how Gunton understands the God of the OT is the same God as the God of the NT, and the second whether his concept of being in communion developed from a doctrine of the Trinity can be universally applicable.

8.1. One God and the Trinity

For Gunton, as for others, the God of Israel (YHWH) is the same God as the God of Jesus (the Father) and the God of the Church (Father, Son and Spirit).[1] That being the case, however, Gunton has not provided an explanation as to how or in what way he understands the two are united, unlike some other trinitarian theologians who do so by identifying the God of Israel, YHWH, with the Father of Jesus Christ,[2] or the Lord Jesus Christ,[3] or Father, Son and Spirit.[4] The identification of YHWH of the OT with the Father of the NT, though most common, needs to face the passages in the NT in which the YHWH passages of the OT are applied to Jesus,[5] let alone passages showing a contrast between the God of Israel the Jews call father and the God of Jesus Christ, the Father.[6] The identification of Jesus with YHWH, though supported by ample evidence,

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[1] *CF* 188f.
[2] E.g., W. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, Volume 1, tr. G. W. Bromiley, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991, 259f.
[3] E.g., McCleod, *Jesus*, 53f; Rowe, *Christology*, 217f.
[4] E.g., R. Jenson, 'The Triune God,' in Braaten and Jenson, *Dogmatics* I, 92–5; R. K. Soulen, *The Divine Name(s) and the Holy Trinity*, Volume 1: *Distinguishing the Voices*, Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011, 22f.
[5] Cf. Capes, *Yahweh Texts in Paul's Christology*, as referenced above at 180 n.169. For the short list of Christological reading of YHWH texts in the NT, see Bauckham, *Jesus*, 186–9 and 219–22.
[6] In John 8:31–59, for example, the exchanges between Jesus and the Jews who had believed him indicate that the Jews misunderstood God, or that God Jesus calls "your father" is different from God Jesus calls "my father."

raises the question about how the two distinct beings identified by proper names can be recognised as the same without their personal particularity being obliterated. It also makes the place of the Father of Jesus Christ problematic because in the NT the place of "one God" is reserved for the Father, as we saw, whereas in the OT the word "one" is used only of YHWH.[7] Gunton appears to belong to the third group who link the God of Israel with the triune God. This way of relating the theology of the OT and the theology of the NT has an advantage over the other two in that the identification takes place between the God of Israel (rather than YHWH) and the triune God (rather than Father or Jesus). The issue remains, however, concerning how Father, Son and Spirit, three persons, connect with YHWH who is proclaimed to be "one," if the word "one" is taken in a numerical sense, as is the case even by those belonging to this particular group. For Gunton, interestingly, this conundrum is not a problem because he does not work with a strict monotheism; on his understanding, the oneness of the *Shema* is a 'oneness that brooks no rivals, not one of bare mathematics,'[8] and the unity of God in the OT is 'not a blank unity, but a richly diverse personal agent whose works in the created world are mediated by his word, his wisdom, his glory, his name, his spirit.'[9] For Gunton, consequently, trinitarian categories are already there in the words of OT theology, albeit in limited senses.[10] In other words, the OT has a conception of God who is both one and three.[11] It is this trinitarian conception of God, drawn from the doctrine of the Trinity, that appears to be the way whereby Gunton relates the theologies of the OT and of the NT. The problem here, however, is that we are not sure whether that is the case and, if it is, we would still have to face how to use that conception for identifying the OT's God (one personal agency and many intra-personal mediation) and Gunton's God (three inter-personal agents working together) without a qualification or mediating concept. This is a question, however, that has not drawn Gunton's attention. What follows is an

[7] There are only three texts in the OT that has the word "one" connected unambiguously to YHWH or God: for the former, Deut 6:4 and Zech 14:9, and for the latter, Mal 2:10. Job 31:15 might be taken as belonging to the second group. The point to make is twofold. First, if the word "one" means a cardinal number, then we would have to note the imbalance between the meagre proportion of the "one" language used in the OT and the abundance of later interpretation of the word as the cardinal expression of monotheism. If it means what is suggested in this study, however, the rare occurrences of the word in the OT would be a condition that needs support from wider context.
[8] *CF* 84. The idea expressed here resonates with Bauckham's understanding of YHWH's uniqueness in terms of 'unrivalled power' (*Jesus*, 69).
[9] *CF* 182f.
[10] For the use of such broad senses for a view of Jewish literature from a trinitarian perspective, see J. C. O'Neill, *Who did Jesus think he was?* Leiden et al: Brill, 1995, chapter 6, 'The Trinity and the Incarnation as Jewish Doctrines,' 94–114.
[11] Cf. *OTM* 7.

answer to the question attempted on the basis of previous discussions, though still driven by the initiation of Gunton's work and with the help of his conceptuality.

To begin with an implication of our discussion thus far, the ontology of God expressed in the Bible has two sides or aspects: the general and the particular. This is the case even in the *Shema*, where we have a proper name "YHWH" (the particular) and a general noun in "our God" and "one" (the latter if we are correct in our interpretation of the word). Knowing these two aspects concerning the *Shema* and the OT in general is important for identifying what is old and what is new in the NT. Thus, in the case of 1 Cor 8:6, for example, we have "God" and "Lord" on the general side (the old), and "the Father" and "Jesus Christ" on the particular (the new). If Paul is alluding to the *Shema* in this passage, as normally understood, then it is interesting to see how the proper name in the *Shema* (YHWH = Lord) is deprived of its particular aspect as a proper name of God, now functioning only in one aspect of its original capacity, viz., as a general term, like the word "God." It is not surprising, though, because, by the rule set by the inner structure of Deut 6:4, an element of particularity (YHWH as a proper name) cannot be on the side of the general. If, therefore, Paul wanted to maintain the proper name YHWH in its particularity the result would be "one God, YHWH" and "one Lord, YHWH." Only, though, that is not what he says, which is rather "one God, *the Father*" and "one Lord *Jesus Christ*." In so doing, Paul maintains the general side of the *Shema* (God, One) while defining it from the particular side (Father, Jesus).

The significance of the particular for the general is both ontological and epistemological. Ontologically, the general (God, Lord, One) is revealed, even constituted, by the particular (YHWH, Jesus), while the particular is conditioned by the general. Thus, within the theology of the OT in which "YHWH" is identified with "God," the former (the particular) is what the latter (the general) is and the latter is what the former shows it to be. Epistemologically, we know the identity of the general by knowing the particular, and the "nature" (*physis*) of the particular by knowing the general. In 1 Cor 8, thus, we know the identity of the "One" God in verse 4 by knowing the Father and Jesus Christ introduced in verse 6, while we know the nature of the "Lord" Jesus Christ in verse 6 by knowing the one "God" in verse 4. It should be noted that the particular does not determine the nature of the general because, by nature, the divine is divine, and the

human is human, regardless of how they are, but provides the means whereby God reveals, and we know, who and what and how he is.[12]

Now, using the analogy of the general and the particular, we can draw an answer to our first question of this chapter. That is, the God of the OT is the same God as the God of the NT in that they are "God" or "One" (or, less satisfactorily, "one God"), while they are different, in content, the former consisting of "*YHWH*, God of Israel and Lord of the world," and the latter consisting of "God *the Father* and the Lord *Jesus Christ*."[13] This construal of the relationship between the God of the OT and the God of the NT, each in terms of the general and the particular, is not alien to the biblical texts we have examined but rather has three benefits to explicating them: (1) it helps to see that, in both cases, the general ("God," "One," "Lord") is accompanied by the particular ("YHWH," "Father," "Jesus [Christ]"), meaning that both the OT and the NT have both elements of the old and the new; (2) that, in both cases, the particular comes into the place established by the general which in turn is established and made known through the particular, thus YHWH in the OT and Jesus in the NT revealing who/what/how God is; and (3) that the general title "Lord" in the NT is continuous with the proper name "YHWH" in the OT, implying a transition of the same element (*kyrios*) from the perspective of the particular to that of the general. It appears, as might be noticed by some, that we have encountered a biblical basis of the trinitarian terms of *ousia* and *hypostasis*.[14] These terms tend to be taken as philosophical or abstract and dismissed as foreign to the Bible.[15] Properly understood, however, not only by the analogy of "the common and the particular" but also by that of "the separated and the conjoined,"[16] then one now would be able to see that they correspond very well with what we are discussing here in terms of the general (*ousia*) and the particular (*hypostasis*). Thus, even in the *Shema*, one can see by them that while it has both elements of *ousia* (God or One) and *hypostasis* (YHWH) they are related to each other in such a way as that their values can be recognised only from a perspective with more advanced a conceptuality like that of the Cappadocians.[17] With the help of later concepts applied to OT theology, we understand further that the concept of "mono-theism" or its link with the *Shema*

[12] Cf. *CF* 90f, for Gunton's discussion of "nature" in relation to person.
[13] The language of "consist of" is taken from Bauckham, *Jesus*, 101.
[14] In the Cappadocian letter examined in Chapter 4, *ousia* and *hypostasis* are explained first in respect to human beings and then applied to theology.
[15] Cf. McGraths, *God*, 48, for a description of the critical atmosphere.
[16] Cf. §4.3.
[17] As we saw, *ousia* and *hypostasis* meant the same thing before their de-synonymisation by the Cappadocians.

needs to be reconsidered because the defining factor in the *Shema* is one *hypostasis* (YHWH) rather than one *ousia* (God).

The preferability of the analogy of the general and the particular can be demonstrated by comparing it with other approaches. One is the analogy of the old and the new that is proposed by Moberly against modern discussions of the relationship between patriarchal and Mosaic religion.[18] Moberly proposes the analogy of the Old Testament and the New Testament for understanding the theological issues posed by Exodus 3 and 6 or Genesis 12–50 and Mosaic Yahwism in Exodus onward.[19] As an analogy drawn from Christian theology, he justifies its use by saying that despite the danger of anachronistically reading things into the text, later theology 'may contain precisely or substantially the same dynamic that is present in the biblical text.'[20] That being the case, however, the use of this analogy, whether for explaining the relationship between the OT and the NT or between the OT and the OT of the OT, has a twofold shortcoming. On the one hand, it does not give an appropriate explication of how the God of the OT is identical with the God of the NT. As for Christian conviction of identity, Moberly says, 'YHWH the God of Israel is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.'[21] This may be a commonly held description of the relationship between the two theologies, but our discussion thus far enables us to see that the description is too ambiguous to do justice to the complexity involved in both theologies. It is not clear in what sense the reader is to conceive the identity of "YHWH the God of Israel" with "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." As for the conviction of discontinuity, on the other hand, Moberly explains it in terms of God's act or revelation, rather than God's being or nature. He says thus, 'God has done a new thing in Jesus, through whose life, death, and resurrection humanity can know and relate to God in a way not possible before.'[22] Moberly knows that one of the issues at stake is the nature of theology, yet he provides only an account of 'the nature of God as one, yet revealed in different ways.'[23] Thus, for Moberly, the God of Israel is the same as the God of Jesus Christ only because they are "one" in number, and they are different because the one and same God acted in two different ways. The problem is the seeming ignorance of the theological weights put on the identity of YHWH with (the true) God in the OT and on the definite revelation of

[18] Cf. Moberly, *Old Testament*, 107–26.
[19] Moberly, *Old Testament*, 125f.
[20] Moberly, *Old Testament*, 125.
[21] Moberly, *Old Testament*, 127.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Moberly, *Old Testament*, 127f and 172.

the identity of the one God in Jesus Christ as the Father by the NT writers. Not surprisingly, Moberly locates the element of discontinuity predominantly in 'formal religious ethos and practice' and that of continuity predominantly in 'the values and goals of personal (communal and individual) spirituality.'[24] The implication is that the locus of the old and the new should be something other than theology proper, or God *in se,* with the likely result of a homogenisation of the theologies of the old and the new (losing difference), because they are one and the same, or a replacement of the old by the new by the same numerical force (losing identity).

Another approach to the question of identity and difference is offered by Bauckham who states that 'the unique identity of the one God *consists of* the one God, the Father, *and* the one Lord, his Messiah (who is implicitly regarded as the Son of the Father).'[25] The sense delivered here is quite similar to, yet different from, what has been argued above when speaking of the identity in terms of the general and the particular. The following three can be considered as the respects in which lies the difference: (1) that "the one God" is repeated twice, thus being identified twice, first with the one God the Father and second with the Father and the Lord together;[26] (2) that the terminological difference between "God" and "Lord," which is important for the identification of the biblical God, is obliterated by the rushed-in assumption that the latter is the Son of the former, which is neither stated nor implicated in 1 Cor 8:6;[27] and (3) even if the Son is implicated in the title Messiah, the first problem would still remain, because we have one "God" and one "Lord," thus two. One way of avoiding these problems is to think of Bauckham's first "one God" as saying in terms of a specified sense of God, such as being suggested in this study, that is, "God of the world" rather than "the only God in the world." Although the former is an implication of the latter, it needs to be noted that even the latter is not a sense explicitly expressed in Deut 6:4 but, as we saw, a sense that

[24] Moberly, *Old Testament*, 127–30 and 172.
[25] Ibid.
[26] An aspect (duality or triplicity) embedded in the language of "one," as we saw, especially in the biblical imagery of "one body," which can be used in reference to (a) one body in number, thus not two or three bodies (e.g., Matt 19:6), (b) unity of all members belonging to one body (e.g.,1 Cor 10:17), or (c) ontological shape of the one body that is constituted by the members in their relations to each other (e.g., John 17:21).
[27] A "rushed-in assumption" only in that, as far as it concerns the text Bauckham is reviewing for expressing the idea of Messiah as the Son of God, that is 1 Cor 8:6, it is neither stated nor implicated in it. Yet, cf. 1 Cor 1:9 speaking of 'his Son Jesus Christ our Lord,' which is perhaps the only place in the first letter to Corinthians where the relation between God and Lord is explicitly expressed in terms of the Father and the Son through the mediation of Jesus being "Messiah" or "Christ." In the wider context, we have 'I and the Father are one' (John 10:30), which is another allusion to the *Shema*, at least for Bauckham, *Jesus*, 104f.

is worked out through at least two stages of inference (interpreting the word "one" in a numeral sense and then combining that sense to the word "God").

Finally, by using the analogy of the general and the particular, we can reveal some problems of Dunn's account of Christ's Lordship in relation to God as one from his observation of the repeated formula in the Pauline letters in which 'God is spoken of as "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ".'[28] Dunn points to what he takes as 'the striking feature,' namely 'Paul speaks of God not simply as the God of Christ, but as "the *God* . . . of our *Lord* Jesus Christ".'[29] 'Even as Lord,' argues Dunn, 'Jesus acknowledges his Father as his God.'[30] 'Here it becomes plain,' Dunn continues, 'that *kyrios* is not so much a way of *identifying* Jesus with God, but if anything more a way of *distinguishing* Jesus from God.'[31] I have no question about the distinction of Jesus from God by *kyrios*. Yet, what appears to be a sound argument based on a correct reading of the formula becomes problematic if one looks at it with sensitivity to the interplay of the general and the particular. Even in this formula, "God" and "Lord" belong to the general side identified by the particular, "Father" and "Jesus Christ." Interestingly, in both Dunn's reading of the formula and his argument based upon it, there is a striking absence or deliberate omission of the name "Father" and equally striking a consistent paralleling of the particular "Jesus" with the general "God." These are striking in two senses. Firstly, the paralleling of "Jesus" with "God" which better parallels with "Lord" disrupts the relation between "Father" and "Jesus Christ."[32] Secondly, more natural reading of the formula would be that in which the particular "Father" identifies the general "God," just as the general "our Lord" is identified by the particular "Jesus Christ." That is, "God is spoken of as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" is more natural and simpler a way to understand the formula than Dunn's "God is spoken of *as the God and* Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." A problem remains, however, that what we have is the phrase, word for word, "*the* God and Father of …" rather than "God *the* Father of …," which appears to support Dunn's interpretation.

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[28] Dunn, *Theology*, 254. References given are Rom 15:6; 2 Cor 1:3; 11:31; Col 1:3; Eph 1:3, 17; and 1 Pet 1:3. To note, Col 1:3 is different from the rest in that it does not have "and" between "God" and "Father." See, also, 1 Cor 1:2 in which we have "God" followed by "our Father," meaning "God our Father" or "God, our Father."

[29] Ibid. Dunn's emphasis.

[30] Ibid. To note, it is not Jesus but Paul who is speaking here.

[31] Ibid. Dunn's emphasis.

[32] Cf. O'Neill, *Who*, 78f, which provides similar words to Dunn's in which he deals with Socinians' taking of the formula to be the simplest case against the doctrine of the Trinity: 'If God was Jesus' God, Jesus could not have been thought of as the eternal Son of God, let alone the Second Person of the Trinity.'

O'Neill, however, appears more correct in saying that 'the word *Father* in this position in Greek would not take an article, even though the word is a further description of God; the absence of an article does not signal what it would in English, that the word was bound under the previous article,'[33] and 'the Greek article before the word God by no means governs the genitive of Jesus Christ. That genitive goes with the word Father, and Father is coordinate with God, giving fuller information about him.'[34] Thus, for O'Neill, 'God was not spoken of as the God of Jesus Christ; rather, God was further defined and picked out as the one now recognized as the Father of Jesus Christ.'[35] This is the strong probability that O'Neill thinks Socinians overlooked, and it appears that Dunn repeats the same.[36]

8.2. Being as Space

For Gunton the doctrine of the Trinity is the source of what he calls trinitarian analogies of being and becoming.[37] There is a problem, however. Gunton's transcendentals are of the triune God, neither of any God nor God in general. Besides, the meaning of the doctrine of the Trinity is a matter of ongoing discussion.[38] The question is how Gunton's transcendental concepts developed from a particular doctrine of the Trinity whose precise meaning is still controversial, even among Christians, can be applied to understanding all beings, however appropriately they are developed. What we are seeking is a conception of the being of God that is more fundamental than Gunton's God as communion and so has the capacity to better serve as a basis for his transcendental purpose. We shall approach it by dealing with an ontological question that is raised by the previous discussion: what kind of being that God is whose identity

[33] O'Neill, *Who*, 79.
[34] O'Neill, *Who*, 79 n.10.
[35] O'Neill, *Who*, 79. Original emphasis. For a similar understanding, see Peter T. O'Brien, *Colossians-Philemon*, Dallas: Word Books, 7, which has 'τῷ θεῷ πατρὶ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ("to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ").'
[36] It is difficult to find a reference to "God" immediately followed by "of Jesus Christ" (or reference to his person), while the reference to "Father" followed by "of Jesus Christ" is numerous. Yet cf. Matt 27:46 (Mark 15:34), which seems to be the only one of the case in which Jesus calls God "my God." The weight of this example is not so strong against the other case because it is the only evidence supporting "Jesus' God," let alone that it comes in the form of citation from Psalm 22. On the other hand, we find "my God" addressed to Jesus in John 20:28 and "our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ" in 1 Titus 2:13.
[37] Cf. *OTM* 140f.
[38] See, for example, Gunton's and Kilby's view of Augustin's speaking of "hypostases or persons" (*Trinity* 7.4) in Gunton, 'Trinity,' 940 and Kilby, 'Trinity,' 519. Jason S. Exton and Stanley N. Gundry (eds), *Two Views On the Doctrine of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014) is interactions of the arguments between two models of the Trinity ("Classical" and "Relational"). Debates are ongoing between Brian Leftow ("Latin Trinitarianism") and William Hasker ("Social Trinitarianism"). Thus, Dale Tuggy, 'The unfinished business of Trinitarian theorizing,' *Religious Studies* 39, 2003, 163–83.

remains the same while undergoing such a change as from "YHWH God" in the OT[39] to "God the Father,"[40] or even "God the Father, the Son and the Spirit,"[41] in the NT.

Before going further, a note needs to be taken that any revealed identity is not the object of our investigation. For divine identity, or any personal identity,[42] is more a matter of revelation than of definition, something first to be revealed by God himself.[43] All revelation, consequently, whether of YHWH to Moses or the Father in Jesus Christ, is something to be accepted, rejected or ignored. That being the case, we are not dealing with a direct revelation of which we have those choices but the literature or traditions that contain information about divine identities that are already revealed and accepted.[44] This helps to put aside studies in which revelation has no bearings on the treatments of the biblical texts and their theological issues, as is the case especially among the scholars of history of religions school and those adapting their tenets.[45] It also helps to explore something similar to what Gunton understands the established doctrine of the Trinity was meant to be, that is, 'a way of characterising the being of God, that is, of saying something of the kind of being that God is.'[46] Gunton expresses it in terms of "a communion of persons," "a being in relation," and "a dynamic personal order of giving

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[39] The appearance of "YHWH" in identification with "God" in the OT is countless, more than a thousand times. Cf. Ex 34:23; Deut 7:21 et al.

[40] "God the Father" is not only the name of the God of Jesus Christ and the apostles, but also a name that is virtually absent in the OT if understood in the sense of it in the NT. God is indeed called "father" in the OT but all references to God as "father" in the OT (Ps 68:5; 89:26; Isa 63:16; 64:8; Jer 3:4, 19; Mal 1:6; 2:10), except Isa 9:6, are mainly about the saving aspect of God in relation to Israel, unlike the Father in the NT which takes the universal aspect beyond the boundary of Jerusalem, and its sense is mostly metaphorical than nominal or referential as in the NT.

[41] Most explicitly in Matt 28:19. For a trinitarian structure, cf. also, Matt 3:16–17 (Mark 1:10–11; Luke 3:21–22); John 14:26; Acts 10:38; 2 Cor 13:14 et al.

[42] As Gunton perceptively comments, 'revelation is in large measure something that is mediated to us, by and through the other. We require the other if we are to know anything at all; we therefore require revelation if we are to understand our neighbour and the world …' (*BTR* 22).

[43] The credal statements in the Bible are, for Gunton, '*confessions made in response to revelation, and so become, or may become, mediators of it*' (*BTR* 14. Gunton's emphasis).

[44] Cf. 1 John 1:1–4; 1 Cor 5:1–8. Gunton is not thinking of 'a naive view of the relation of words and world' but 'a reality already mediated through language' (*IA* 42), as also noted by Schwöbel, 'Shape,' 204.

[45] E.g., Robert Karl Gnuse, *No Other Gods: Emergent Monotheism in Israel*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997; and James S. Anderson, *Monotheism and Yahweh's appropriation of Baal*, London et al: Bloomsbury, 2015. For a substantial critique of this "developmental" or "evolutionary" approach in German scholarship, see Moberly, *Old Testament*, 107–25; for a critique of Gnuse's work in particular, Bauckham, *Jesus*, 71–82. Anderson closely follows his predecessors to come up with a historical reconstruction of the development of monotheistic Yahwism by appropriation of Baal, which however is selective, speculative and even arbitrary: *selective* because it uses minor evidence that is also contained in the OT against the general message of the OT; *speculative* since one cannot be sure whether biblical writers indeed appropriated the traits of El, Baal and Asherah or displaced them from the place of God; and *arbitrary* in that monotheism is not the end point of the biblical movement, which is rather the true God, and the notion of "development" or "evolution" does not reflect the way in which biblical books were written and collected from perspectives given by the end point.

[46] *OTM* 145. Cf. also, *AB* 94f.

and receiving."[47] Gunton's, therefore, is an attempt to understand and express the kind of God who is revealed in Jesus Christ, recoded in the Bible and established by the doctrine of the Trinity.[48] A similar attempt is being made here, yet now in the pre-trinitarian context of early Christianity in which we have seen an old identity of God (YHWH God) give way to a new one (God the Father) in the context of One God.[49] Here, to repeat, we are not probing divine identity but, rather, the kind of being God is who allows for a change in identity while remaining the same through the change.

The key is to know what is common to both theologies of the OT and the NT and the nature of the change in identity. An approach can be considered by looking at Tiling's promotion of the conception of "relational monotheism" over "numerical monotheism."[50] Drawing on the works of MacDonald and others,[51] Tiling notes that 'it [*Shema*] emphasises the *personal* and *relational* in terms of the confession that YHWH is one.'[52] 'The "monotheism" of the Deuteronomy,' he argues, 'is relational in import, concerned with love and devotion to this one God.'[53] Although this is said apart from his second point about the relation between YHWH and Israel, he says little about the being confessed as one. The discussion, rather, swiftly moves focus onto the relation between Israel and her God as the sole basis of an explication of a relational understanding of Paul's monotheism in 1 Cor 8:1–3 and 6.[54] Again, the relational discussed is of Paul's understanding of true faith in God, rather than the being of God. What is then common to both Deut 6:4 and 1 Cor 8:1–6 according to Tiling is that the one God is relational in import, yet relational not *in se* but in relation to his people. This is surely an advancement from a numerical understanding of monotheism, highlighting the importance of understanding "one YHWH" or "one God" in the context of love rather than non-committal knowledge. That said, however, this relational monotheism provides little for finding what we are looking for because it says little of the being of God *in se*.

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[47] *OTM* 214, 225.
[48] Thus, for Gunton, the doctrine of the Trinity has two capacities: it establishes an identification of the God revealed in Jesus Christ; and it shows something of the kind of being that God is who is revealed that way.
[49] Cf. Bauckham, *Jesus*, 56, for a similar observation.
[50] Tiling, *Divine-Christology*, 67–71.
[51] Cf. MacDonald, *Monotheism*, 97, 151 and 207; Geller, 'God,' 293.
[52] Tiling, *Divine-Christology*, 69.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Tiling, *Divine-Christology*, 69–71 and 73–6.

Bauckham has more to say regarding the relational nature of God *in se* in his discussion of John 10:30 as an allusion to the *Shema*.[55] In this passage, according to him, 'Jesus is not saying that he and the Father are a single person, but that together they are one God.'[56] This oneness of Jesus and the Father is not simply a matter of 'closeness of association or concurrence of will' but a sort of 'relational unity'[57] in which 'the Father is who he is only in relation to the Son and vice versa.'[58] 'It is in the portrayal of this intra-divine relationship,' says Bauckham, 'that John's Christology steps outside the categories of Jewish monotheistic definition of the unique identity of the one God.'[59] Bauckham qualifies this stepping out as not a denial of or a contradiction to the unique identity of the one God but a redefinition of it as 'one in which Father and Son are inseparably united in differentiation from each other.'[60] The language here is very similar to that whereby we saw how Gunton understands the doctrine of the Trinity. To that extent, however, the former shares the weaknesses of the latter. The question common to both is whether we can apply their conceptuality to the understanding of the theology of the *Shema*. The answer is negative in that there we have YHWH and God (and One) as two different words referring to the same being, while in the fourth Gospel we have Father and Son as two different words referring to distinct beings, one the sent (Son) and the other the sending (Father). Thus, we are prevented from taking such a relational unity as found by Bauckham as common to the theologies of the OT and the NT.

That said, however, Bauckham's account of Christological innovation within the contours of the early Jewish monotheism has an implication that the theology of the OT is of the nature that is formed by God's interaction with his people and open to redefining or reshaping from the perspective given by a new revelation of God in his interaction with his people. What is involved in writing is a two-way movement in which the OT writers provide general ways (God, Word, Wisdom, Lord, etc.) which are originally linked to YHWH and through them the NT writers express a new identity of God reflected upon the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. That being the case, it would be quite inappropriate to understand this identity change in terms of a 'transition from

[55] Bauckham, *Jesus*, 104–6.
[56] Bauckham, *Jesus*, 104.
[57] Bauckham, *Jesus*, 105. Cf. M. L. Appold, *The Oneness Motif in the Fourth Gospel*, Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1976, 281f.
[58] Bauckham, *Jesus*, 106.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.

YHWH to the God of Jesus Christ' as precedented by the 'transition from the God of the patriarchs to YHWH.'[61] The problem is that by identifying the particular with the general, or not upholding them in distinction, it fails to grasp the general aspect of the ontology of God that endures through the changes. The name YHWH disclosed to Moses, to be precise, does not replace or surpass the identity of the God of the patriarchs but, rather, makes it known (Thus, in Ex 3:15, "YHWH, God of your fathers, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob …"). And, later in the NT, it is still the God of the patriarchs, "the God of our fathers," who is said to have glorified his servant Jesus (Acts 3:13).

The analogy of the general and the particular might help us to get a better explanation of the identity transition observed by Bauckham, by saying that the (general) identity of God remains the same, whereas the substance of the general (God) changes with the change on the side of the particular. God remains the same as God, in other words, as the NT maintains the general side of the *Shema* or the OT in general, while the identity of the general undergoes a change in content alongside the changes on the side of the particular. This analogy also helps us to see that the movement of the change in identity is not directly from one general to one particular (e.g., from "God" to "Father") or from one particular to one general (e.g., from "YHWH" to "the triune God") but an indirect one from one general to another (e.g., "God" to "the triune God") through the change from one particular to another (e.g., "YHWH" to "Father" or "YHWH" to "Jesus") which takes place through the mediation of the general (e.g., God, Lord, Word, Wisdom etc.). Here is then what we have been looking for, a concept that not only bridges the theology of the OT with the theology of the NT but also provides a universal basis on which one might understand and use Gunton's transcendental conceptuality: *being as space* (koinonia, perichoresis) *in which the general* (ousia) *interrelate to the particular* (hypostasis) *in such a way that the former conditions the latter which in turn constitutes the former in relation to one another*.

8.3. Space and Personhood

Having considered various matters of relevance to this study, we are now in a position to answer the three questions that were raised at the beginning of this work regarding the concept of space used in Gunton's discussion of the doctrine of the image of God.[62]

[61] Bauckham, *Jesus*, 56f. For other approaches, see the discussion at §7.2.3.
[62] Introduction, 9.

To the first question as to whether the concept of space is not more fundamental than that of communion, we can now say that it is so in the sense that it can be used for referring to the "conditional" aspect that makes a communion of persons possible and allows for the communion to have a certain shape. We can also answer the third question, about the "consequential" aspect of the being of God, by saying that Gunton's conceptuality requires a concept indicating what he conceives of the three persons making together in their relations to one another, and the concept of space may well serve the purpose. As for the second question regarding what Gunton refers to by 'their personal being,' we can say that it is to the 'personal space in which the three persons are for and from each other in their otherness.'[63] Being as space, therefore, is not something alien to Gunton's work but, rather I wish to argue, is the direction in which his ontology was moving though it was not fully realised in his work.

On the one hand, Gunton approximates asserting the idea of being as space by using such terms as "shape," "*taxis*," "structure" or even "space" in his enquires about ontology, all indicative of ontological spatiality.[64] Thus, of the being of the triune God, he says 'a personal *taxis* of dynamic and free relations,'[65] 'a structure of love—of persons in communion,'[66] and 'the personal space in which persons give to and receive from each other what they are.'[67] He also says, now of the church, 'the place—the living space—where the kingship, priesthood and prophetic work of Jesus is appropriated.'[68] On the other hand, however, these terms of spatial imagery tend to be used only for explicating the "relational" aspect of being, falling short of becoming a term for referring to the ontological aspect that comes into view only by knowing the ways in which the persons are related to each other. A recognition of this double status of the concept of space in Gunton started our discussion, and through the process we sought to argue for a fuller realisation of it within Gunton's conceptual framework.

Here, finally, I wish to suggest a way in which one can make use of the concept of space for the ontology of being in relation or in communion, at least to the extent that he uses the concepts of "relation" and "otherness" for his ontological explorations. It can be

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[63] *PTT* 110.
[64] Of relevance here is the concept of "shape" used by Schwöbel as meaning 'a structured whole of connected theological insights, combining positions he shared with others with his own particular emphases' ('Shape,' 182). For Gunton's use of the word "shape" in such a sense, see *PTT* 32.
[65] *PTT* 145.
[66] *FSS* 32.
[67] *PTT* 134. Also, 128.
[68] *CF* 123.

used, that is to say, for indicating the ontological aspect that Gunton attempted to express in various terms, such as 'a communion of persons, each distinct but inseparable from the others, whose being consists in their relations with one another' (of God);[69] 'a dynamic of beings in relation' (of the world);[70] and 'a being in relation' (of the person).[71] The intended notion is that all beings are substantial (one, *ousia*), relational (many, *hypostases*) *and* spatial (three, *koinonia*).

There are two advantages of using the concept of space in this way in relation to Gunton's conceptuality. Firstly, it helps to overcome a difficulty involved in the application of Gunton's conception of being in relation even to a *hypostatic* being. As for *ousianic* beings such as God, church and world, we know that Gunton speaks of relation and otherness between the particulars (hypostases) within or constituting a being. As for the particulars, however, the question is what "relation" Gunton has in mind in speaking of them as a being in relation or communion. Given that in most discussions he speaks of the human in plural, for example, 'humankind as finite persons-in-relation,'[72] one can safely say that he conceives the person as a being in relation, mainly in relation to *God*, *people* and *the rest of the world*. Here, however, the relation is not between intra-personal constituents, such as body, mind and spirit, or faith, love and hope, as is the case with Gunton's ontology of God, world and church. Gunton has justifications for being cautious, though. For one, he knows well the problematic consequences resulting from the approach that stresses one characteristic of the human (e.g., reason) to the exclusion of others (e.g., body).[73] Another is that person is an "idea" that is logically primitive reflecting what is ontologically primitive and so difficult to define in other terms.[74] That being the case, however, defining personhood only in relation to other beings may run the risk of turning the personal to the impersonal,[75] making the concept of person useful only for defining *ousianic* being. That is perhaps why Gunton's emphasis on relation and his conception of communion discomfort, perhaps against his will, some who are particularly concerned about the loss of personal identity.[76] If they have any justification for their concern it should be only to

[69] *PTT* 109.
[70] *PTT* 111.
[71] *PTT* 114.
[72] Cf. *PTT* 117.
[73] Cf. *PTT* 100–3.
[74] *PTT* 109; *AB* 95.
[75] The concern expressed by John Aves, 'Persons in Relation: John Macmurray,' in Schwöbel and Gunton, *Persons*, 129–35.
[76] Cf. §3.2.6.

do with a concept whereby the enduring aspect of personal identity is maintained, rather than Gunton's emphasis on relation against the ontology of the individual.[77] We are faced, ultimately, with the challenge of overcoming a difficult tension: with Gunton's legitimate emphasis on constitutive relationality on the one hand and his critics' valid concern against the loss of personal identity to relationality, on the other. One merit of the concept of space is that it can be used for both *ousianic* and *hypostatic* beings. Put another way, the use of the concept of being as space in the ways discussed thus far in this study can help to set the concept of person free from its tight attachment to *hypostasis* and stand on its own terms as a word for an *ousianic* being which has its own hypostases and relations between them.[78] At the end of the day, by *ousianic* and *hypostatic* beings, we are not speaking of two separate beings but two distinct aspects of one being.

Secondly, the ontology of being as space can help to uphold various aspects integral to Gunton's ontology. For example, in speaking of the church in terms of "institution" and "community," he explains the former as *given* reality and the latter as *constituted* reality, though he puts emphasis on the latter without doing away with the former.[79] He also speaks of creation as a "project" that is *ordered* yet not closed but *open* to God's action.[80] Likewise, he understands the person as both *created* and *oriented* to an end, putting it under the light of "protology" as well as "eschatology."[81] While the operation of these contrasting yet complementary categories is essential to Gunton's ontological thinking, his ontology itself remains vaguely demarcated. An attempt to move beyond the dialect is found in Zizioulas' quest for 'a new ontological category' after considering human existence in terms of "biological" and "ecclesial" hypostases, and finds or locates it in the holy eucharist, 'a community, a network of relations.'[82] The question is whether this "sacramental or eucharistic" hypostasis is not another aspect of human existence complementing the biological and the ecclesial, rather than of hypostasis itself, though its connotation is more comprehensive than the other two. Yet, again, it is a

[77] Cf. *PTT* 84–7; *OTM* 26f and 168f.
[78] Cf. *FSS* 178f, where Gunton speaks of 'a spiritual-material unity,' 'a psycho-physical person,' and 'a material-spiritual being,' in his discussion of the humanity of Jesus Christ, with reference to Hans W. Wolff, *The Anthropology of the Old Testament*, tr. Margaret Kohl, London: SCM Press, 1973, chs.2–4.
[79] *TtT* 198. Cf. also, *CF* 121.
[80] Cf. *PTT* 180–4; *TC* 12; *CF* 35f. for a critical engagement with Gunton on providence and God's action, cf. Terry, J. Wright, 'Colin Gunton on Providence: Critical Commentaries,' in Harvey, *Gunton*, 146–64.
[81] *PTT* 115. Proctology in reference to Graham MacFarlane, 'Strange News from Another Star. An Anthropological Insight from Edward Irving,' in Schwöbel and Gunton, *Persons*, 98–119, and eschatology in reference to Zizioulas (work not specified, and appears to refer to the discussion in Zizioulas, *Being*, 49–65).
[82] Zizioulas, *Being*, 59f.

problem that can be overcome with the help of spatial thinking. Among the connotations the concept of space has are *inclusiveness* and *boundedness*, which enables the word "space" to be used for referring to the general side of personal identity (including aspects of relation and otherness, of mind and body, of biological, ecclesial and eucharistic), rather than leaving it unbounded or undefined. However, due to its association of *openness*, *receptivity*, *pervasiveness* and so on, the concept of space can also help to sustain the other aspect of personal identity that undergoes changes with time yet is no less important than the enduring aspect for what/who the person is. If the general side of being a person is the enduring aspect of personal identity ("the same yesterday, today and for ever"),[83] particulars, including intra-personal constituents and inter-personal interactions, together determine who or what the person is then, now or in the future. 'If,' therefore, 'anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation' (2 Cor 5:17), yet not just 'brought within a new pattern of relationship,'[84] but also for an ontological reshaping in the relationship.[85] We saw that Gunton thinks of being, whether *ousianic* or *hypostatic*, in both terms but less misunderstandings of his work would have followed had he used the concept of space more clearly and less ambiguously than we have seen he did.

[83] See *YT* 157, for Gunton's effort to maintain this 'continuous' aspect by the concept of substance: 'If Jesus Christ is a human and divine reality, the same yesterday, today and for ever, then models evoking the reality of this continuity will be proper ones.' See *TC* 33, for what Gunton does not mean by "enduring aspect of being."

[84] *FSS* 213.

[85] Schwöbel considers three senses of new being in Jesus Christ in his 'Human Being As Relational Being: Twelve Theses for a Christian Anthropology,' Schwöbel and Gunton, *Persons*, 148, yet all from the perspective of relational ontology, with focus concentrated on relationship rather than the old being renewed in relationship: (a) new in the sense of being grounded in the relationship of God the creator to his creation; (2) new in the sense of the reconstitution of the relationship between God and humanity which God intended from the beginning; and (3) new in the sense of the fulfilment of the relationship.

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